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HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

By ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

"THE HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CALLED METHODISM," ETC.

VOLUME IV

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: CURTS & JENNINGS

PREFACE.

George I. Seney, Esq.

My Dear Sir: In committing to the press this concluding volume of the "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," I would gratefully acknowledge my obligations to you. If I have succeeded, to any satisfactory degree, in my task, it has been largely owing to the reliefs which your kind attentions have afforded me from cares and anxieties, that would have seriously interfered with it. Your honored father appears briefly in my narrative; the first collegiately-educated native preacher of his Church, except Fisk, and a man of most sterling talents and character, the friend and colaborer of Bangs, Emory, Soule, Ostrander, Rice, and the other strong men of the second generation of American Methodist preachers, he will be one of the most interesting subjects of the later history of his denomination. The Church is happy to recognize in you the worthy son of so worthy a father. It finds, in this its third generation, the descendants of its early and heroic itinerants not only thronging its ministry, but founding, on enduring financial bases, its educational and other great institutions.

In my former work (the "History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism," etc.) I brought the narrative down to 1839, the Centenary of British Methodism, and designed to conclude the present work at the same period. There was no important reason, however, for the latter purpose, as American Methodism has its own distinct centenary. But it would be as inexpedient to extend the record to the latter date as to limit it to the former; our recent controversies cannot yet be satisfactorily narrated; the chief actors in some of them are still living, the families of many of the actors in the earlier ones still survive. There is also a hopeful tendency of reunion among our denominational parties which should not be disturbed by a return, however guarded, to their old disputes. Not till years hence can the historian safely review these unfortunate events.

I have had a twofold design in this narrative: first, to show the real development of Methodism on this continent, its interior life, and its genetic conditions; for in these we must find the best lessons of its history for all time. Secondly, to keep within such chronological limits as should not require an inconvenient number of volumes, and yet should allow of a substantially complete history of the Church, of its inception, its organization, its chief personal agents, its theological and disciplinary systems, and finally those adjuncts of its practical system—Publishing, Educational, Sunday-School, and Missionary institutions—which have, for the present at least, rounded, if not perfected its scheme. These, brought out in a closely consecutive record of events and characters, have seemed to me the genuine constituents of such a history as

the denomination now needs. I do not presume to think that I have adequately prepared for it such a history; but I have done what I could toward it. The period at which I close admits, with peculiar convenience, of this comprehensive plan. All these adjuncts of our practical system had appeared before that date; and without violence to the canons of historical writing, I have been able to trace these institutions down to our own time, estimating their original significance by their prospective results. The period also fittingly closes with the disappearance of Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat, Lee, and most of the great original leaders of the denomination from the scene. A historian, or even an epic poet, could hardly demand a more befitting *denouement* to his story, or more interesting and romantic materials for it.

What, therefore, remains unrecorded in my volumes is but the chronological continuation of the system here described, its continuous working, without much, if anything, essentially different, except a new generation of preachers, and the occasional controversies and schisms which have disturbed, but hardly impaired it, and which I trust my readers will be as happy as myself to escape.

In following my main design, of exhibiting the vital principles and workings of Methodism, I have necessarily been most minute in the earliest data, condensing as I advance toward our own times. From the peculiar organization of the Church, Methodist history is peculiarly biographic, a fact which enhances much its popular interest, but also the difficulties of its writers. Scores, if not hundreds, of personal characters are more or less sketched in these volumes; and, in order to relieve the biographical tone of the story, many are portrayed at their introduction to the ministry, others at some important event in which they took a prominent part, and still others not till their obituary in the Conference Minutes. Not a few important characters are hardly more than mentioned; they were necessarily referred to the times of their obituary record, which come after my final date; they will afford precious material for another volume, for one volume more will be necessary to bring the history down to its centenary year. I have no design of writing that volume, at least not within the next ten or fifteen years. I have gathered ample materials for it, but they will be left in the library of the Drew Theological School for the use of some abler hand. After many years of hardest toil, and the postponement of other literary plans, my design has been accomplished as well as I feel myself able to do it; that design has been, not to exhibit the Church merely in what is sometimes called its "heroic period," but in its full maturity, its complete structure, as it stands before us to-day, excepting only the extension of some of its outer works. Its "heroic period," I trust, still continues, and will, while it has indefinite frontier fields to invade. Its history will be equally indefinite, in continuance, at least. I gladly give way to my successors in the grateful task of recording its later triumphs.

ABEL STEVENS.

ORIENTA, MAMARONECK, N. Y.,
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HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BOOK V.

FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1792 TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804.

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METHODISM IN THE EASTERN STATES, CONTINUED: 1796–1804.

Asbury in the East — Success — Wilbraham Conference — Lorenzo Dow — Continued Success — Evangelical Adventures of Hibbard and Vannest — First Conference in Maine — Scenes there — Conference at Granville — State of the Church — William Beauchamp — Daniel Webb — Epaphras Kibby — Hardships in Maine — Conversion of General M'Clellan's Family — Joshua Soule — Results — Lorenzo Dow — Elijah Hedding's Services and Character — Methodism in New England in 1800 — The Bishops in the East — Lee's Farewell Tour — Itinerant Recruits — Thomas Branch's Death in the Wilderness — Martin Ruter and Laban Clark — Persecutions — Great Success.

About September, 1797, Asbury, sick, and worn out with labors, was pursuing his way toward the East, to attend the New England Conference, which was to sit at Wilbraham on the 19th of that month; but on arriving at New Rochelle, N. Y., he was unable to go further. He was "swelling in the face, bowels, and feet," and only after two weeks could he place his foot on the ground. On September 12th, when he was able to walk but once or twice across the room,

he wrote a letter to Lee, instructing him to preside at the Wilbraham Conference, believing it would be impossible for himself to reach it. Though depressed with disease and exhaustion, his heart glowed with the idea of the great cause for which he labored. "Methodism," he exclaims in his letter, "is union all over: union in exchange of preachers; union in exchange of sentiments; union in exchange of interest: we must draw resources from the center to the circumference."

Notwithstanding the arrangement made with Lee, the tireless bishop was on his route for Wilbraham the day after the date of his letter, but was unable to proceed, and returned to his comfortable lodgings at New Rochelle, where he went to bed with a high fever. He was disabled for several weeks, and "distressed at the thought of a useless and idle life." "Lord help me," he exclaims, "for I am poor and needy; the hand of God hath touched me." Lee proceeded to take his place at the Conference.

The labors of the year had been successful; extensive revivals had occurred on several of the circuits. There was a gain of three circuits, though, owing to the fact that two (Greenwich and Marblehead) which had been distinct were now merged in neighboring appointments, the numerical gain is but one. The returns of members amounted to 3,000, lacking one, showing an increase of 480—about one fourth of the gains of the whole Church for this year. Both the aggregate and the increase were doubtless larger, for there are no returns from Vermont, though an extensive circuit had been formed within that state, and one of the New York Circuits, also, reached into it and included several incipient societies.

On the 19th of September, 1797, the New England

Conference convened, a second time, in Wilbraham, Mass. Lee presided, and made the appointments for the ensuing year, in conformity with Asbury's request, and with the approbation of the preachers. I have been able to glean but few particulars respecting the session. "The business," says Lee, "was conducted to the satisfaction of the preachers, and peace and love dwelt among us." Some encouraging tidings were reported from the circuits. The evangelists from Maine had planned a new circuit, and extended considerably their former ones. They brought from Bath Circuit, which had been formed the preceding year, returns to the amount of thirty-one members. From Penobscot, where Enoch Mudge had labored, chiefly, (though appointed to Bath,) they reported the news of an extended revival, and an accession of thirty seven souls. Jesse Stoneman brought word of a gain of nearly one hundred on Portland Circuit, and Brodhead reported from Readfield, his first appointment in New England, news of an ingathering of ninety-four converts. Philip Wager, who, after having traveled as the first regularly appointed Methodist preacher in Maine, had been sent alone the last year into New Hampshire, to travel the first circuit in that state, came back with the report of a gain of twenty-four, and of a prospect widening on all sides for the success of other laborers. The indefatigable Joseph Mitchell had good news, also, from Granville. Under his zealous labors the word had run and been glorified, and sixty-nine members had been added to the Church. Evan Rogers reported cheering tidings from Tolland. Opposition had raged, the pulpits of that region had fulminated against the new sect; but God owned them by powerful outpourings of his Spirit, and they had gained a net increase of seventy three. Woolsey had

also witnessed good results on Redding Circuit, where about fifty had been received. Joshua Hall had gone from Needham Circuit to Sandwich, on Cape Cod, and been the instrument of a widespread revival, and a new circuit was now reported in that section, with forty-seven members. These were signal results in the estimation of the hardworking evangelists of the time, and their hearts warmed within them at such evidences of their progress. They thanked God and took courage.

Asbury had sent to the Conference a communication, proposing the appointment of Lee and two others (Whatcoat and Poythress) as assistant bishops; the Conference, as we have noticed, declined the proposition as being incompatible with the requirements of the Discipline,[1] but at the close of the session they gave Lee a certificate signifying their wish that he would "travel with the bishop and fill his appointments when the latter could not be present."[2] The eccentric Lorenzo Dow was there, and repeated his application (declined at the Thompson Conference) for admission to the noble company of itinerants. Their growing success, ardent zeal, and vast labors, enlisted his indomitable spirit; he felt a heroic sympathy with their cause, but they still feared his aberrations, and rejected his request. Mitchell and Bostwick pleaded for him till they could plead no more, and sat down and wept. He was allowed to travel under the direction of the presiding elder, but was not enrolled with the band. He was a right-hearted, but wrong-headed man, labored like a Hercules, did some good, and had an energy of character which with sounder faculties would have rendered him as eminent as he was noted. Joshua Wells, who had been

[1] Lee's Mem., chap. 14.

[2] Lee's His. of Meth., anno 1797.

traveling with Asbury, was present during the session, and aided by his counsels in its deliberations.[3]

Five of the preachers located this year, broken down in health, or tired of the severities of an itinerant life, but able men, Shadrach Bostwick, Michael Coate, Peter Jayne, William Thacher, and others took their places.

Immediately after the Wilbraham Conference, Lee, agreeably to the vote of that body and the request of Asbury, hastened to New Rochelle, N. Y., where the bishop was awaiting him. Thence they journeyed southward, as we have seen, through all the Atlantic states as far as Georgia. He returned to New York, laboring night and day on the way, and on the 9th of July, 1798, left that city again for New England. On his route, Asbury and Joshua Wells overtook him. They tarried together over night, at New Rochelle, Asbury being still quite unwell. On the 13th they entered Connecticut. They pressed forward, holding meetings almost daily, through Rhode Island and Massachusetts into the heart of Maine. At Readfield they proposed to hold the first Conference in the province. The ecclesiastical year, 1797–8, had been the most prosperous one recorded thus far in the history of Eastern Methodism. Widespread revivals had prevailed, and the struggling cause had everywhere advanced, augmenting its membership by more than one third. The circuits were not much increased in number, but greatly extended, especially in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, the former of which, though it had hitherto yielded no returns, now reported a considerable membership. Many new societies had been organized in all the New England states, several chapels erected, and a large band of local preachers formed and brought

[3] Asbury's Journals, anno 1797.

into effective co-operation with the traveling ministry. The plans, which had hitherto been incipient, now began to develop their power and results. There was a growing consciousness of stability and vigor, in the new communion, of no small importance to its efficiency; and the doctrines of Methodism—so liberal and yet so vital—began to be more generally approved, except by those who were officially interested in the maintenance of the theology which had hitherto prevailed. The truth had advanced victoriously among the new settlements in the wilderness of the Penobscot. The people welcomed the joyful sound, and more than a hundred and fifty were received into the Church. The divine flame had also spread along the banks of the Kennebec, and many had been turned from darkness to light. Great multitudes had been awakened and converted on Cape Cod; and in Connecticut, especially, the excitement extended as fire in stubble; Middletown, New London, Tolland, Reading, and Litchfield Circuits had made rapid progress, not only in numbers, but in the provision of chapels.

Hibbard had been called out during the year from the local ministry, to assist the preachers on Pittsfield and Litchfield Circuits. He has left us an account of the revivals there, in which he says: "I think more than one hundred were awakened on these two circuits. Some joined the Congregationalists, and some the Baptists, and some the Methodists. The work of God in convicting and converting and sanctifying souls was very evident. Persecutions raged some on Litchfield Circuit, but the truth was in power; sometimes they fell as one shot down in battle, and would lay without strength from half an hour to two hours, when they would arise happy in God. Our Presbyterian brethren and others

were afraid it was a delusion. But the revival of religion, having these extraordinary signs attending it, was highly necessary to confound dead formality. Some conversions were extraordinary. In one place I preached in a private house, where the man and his wife and one neighbor made all the congregation. The man and his wife professed religion, but their neighbor did not. However, before I came again in four weeks, that person was converted, and had reported around by what means this change was wrought; so that thereby many others came out, and I had about seventy to preach to, instead of three; and before long many could testify that God for Christ's sake had made that preaching, which some call foolishness, the happy power of salvation to their souls."

Peter Vannest arrived in New England this year. We have seen that on receiving his first appointment in the Middle States, in 1796, he evaded it. He says: "They gave me an appointment, yet I did not go out that year; but I suffered more affliction that year than I had for many years before. I did not know whether this was for disobedience or not, so I promised the Lord I would go if he would go with me. I went to Conference, and Bishop Asbury said to me, 'I am going to send you to England; will you go?' I said, 'Yes, sir.' He said, 'I mean New England, and they are wise people there; it will be a good school for you. Last year I appointed you; now I will send you a great way from home, and you will not run away.' So I went on to Middletown Circuit, in Connecticut, in 1797." His record of his labors is full of incidents, characteristic of the man and the times.

Though his name is on the list of probationers for 1797, it is not affixed to the Middletown appointment.

The omission was doubtless accidental. He labored with remarkable success on that circuit, along with Peter Jayne. "We traveled together," he says, "like David and Jonathan. At that time the societies were few and small, but remarkably kind to the preachers. At the first appointment I attended on the circuit, two men came to dispute with me; I kept to the Bible for help; they soon got out of argument. I told them that some men's religion was in their heads and not in their hearts—cut their heads off and their religion was all gone. The people laughed at them and they went their way. They troubled me no more in that place. At that time we had but few chapels in New England; we preached in such places as we could get. At South Britain the society consisted of three members. I preached there in an underground kitchen. A young man came to the meeting with a pack of cards in his pocket, for company to go to a public house near by to play with; but the Lord smote him, sent him home to burn his cards, and spend part of the night in prayer to God to have mercy on his soul. He sought the Lord with all his heart, and soon after found peace. He lived some years happy in the Lord, died in hope, and, I trust, is in heaven. At a locality near this place, where wickedness prevailed, I went to preach, and gave out the hymn beginning with 'Blow ye the trumpet, blow.' A man, a deist by profession, said that the singing struck him like peals of thunder. He felt as if the judgment was coming, and he was not ready. Several were converted. At another place, about seven miles from Oxford, a man lived that had once belonged to the Methodist Church, but had lost his religion, and in a backslidden state he married a woman of no religion; when he began housekeeping he got reclaimed and found peace with God

He was not willing to eat his morsel alone, but wishing his neighbors to partake with him of the good things of God, invited me to come and preach at his house. The time appointed was very unfavorable; there was nearly two feet of snow, with a hard crust on it; and I had three appointments that day, and about fourteen miles to travel. When I came to the place the people looked at me as if I was as strange a being as they had ever seen. The next morning, while the man of the house was attending to his business at the barn, the woman and I got into conversation; she passed into a great passion, and declared that if ever I came there again she would have me carried away on a rail. But I made a regular appointment there, and soon got a good society. We held a quarterly meeting not far from that place, at Derby; the woman and her husband came to it, but the conduct of the former was such, that the presiding elder observed that he had never seen a woman possessed with so many devils before, yet that same woman got converted and became a very pious and useful member of the Church. What is too hard for the Lord to do? Glory be to his holy name forever! At another place, about three miles from the latter, I formed another society, but a number of men agreed to give me a ride on a rail. They came to meeting; after preaching they went out into the portico and made a great noise; I went to the door to speak to them; the man of the house took hold of me and pulled me back, and said that they wanted to get me out. I opened the door and said, Gentlemen, if you wish to see and hear how we meet class, please to walk in. They did so; I spoke to the class, and likewise to them, and prayed for all; they went away as gentle as lambs; so I learned that love is stronger than weapons of war. We had a society at a

place called Ponsett, near Old Haddam. A member of that society, by the name of Stevens, a shoemaker, moved to a village called Black Rock. Seeing the wickedness of the people, it grieved his righteous soul day by day, and feeling a wish for his neighbors' salvation, he invited me and my colleague, Peter Jayne, to preach in his house, which was very small. The first time that I went, I think there were two or three who ventured into the house, and one or two who looked through the window. We continued there a regular appointment; after a while the people found that we were not so heretical and dangerous as had been supposed, and soon filled the house, and the Lord began to pour out his Spirit upon them. The house became too small; so we moved to a larger one, and in a short time we had a large and respectable society in that place. Some years after I saw a stationed preacher in New York, who told me that he was raised there, and according to his age, when I received his father into society he was about two years old. So the Lord works in his own way, glory be to his holy name! I traveled the year 1797 and part of 1798 on that circuit; we had good times, and nearly doubled our numbers. We were attacked in those days everywhere for our principles. I will give an example. As I was on my way from Norwich to Bozrah, a man came up to me in great haste and concern, and asked me if I was a Methodist preacher. I said, 'Yes, a poor one.' He said, 'I have been wishing and looking to see one this several years, and I am glad that I have found one at last.' I asked him what he 'wanted with him.' He said, 'To make him ashamed of his erroneous principles.' 'What are they?' I asked. 'You hold to falling from grace, don't you?' I said, 'Not so; we hold to getting

grace and keeping it.' 'But you allow that people can fall from grace?' 'That is another thing: angels fell; Adam fell; and St. Paul said, I keep under my body, etc., lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway; if you do not believe the Scriptures you are an infidel.' He said he believed in degrees of falling; that we may fall partly, but not finally. 'Now, sir, if you please, I will ask you a few plain questions. Have you ever had grace?' He answered, 'Yes.' 'Have you any grace now?' 'To be sure I have, as I cannot lose it.' 'Now be honest: Don't you get angry?' 'Yes, I do.' 'Do you not swear?' 'Yes, I do.' 'Do you not get drunk?' 'Yes, I do.' 'What! you do these things? why, you have no more religion than the devil. Sir, I allow two degrees in falling: the first is to fall from grace as you have, if you ever had any; and if you do not repent and do your first works, the next fall will be into hell, to be miserable forever.' He put whip to his horse and went off in a hurry, and I thought that he would not be in haste to find another Methodist preacher."[4]

In 1798 Vannest entered New York, and was colleague of Thomas Woolsey on Croton Circuit. He returned to New England the next year, and traveled two years respectively on Whitingham and Essex Circuits in Vermont. Methodism was recent and unpopular on these circuits; and at that time the labors and trials of the itinerants were such as would hardly now appear credible. Vannest did brave service there; he scattered the seed of the truth in many new places, and by his deep devotion and characteristic cordiality won the interest of the people, many of whom were added to the societies. In 1801 he was sent to Connecticut, and

[4] Letter to the author.

traveled New London and Pomfret Circuit. The following two years he was traversing the wilds of Upper Canada, as we have seen, with Sawyer and Bangs, among the new settlements on the Bay of Quinte and Oswegatchie Circuits; he returned and spent two years on circuits in New Jersey, and then passed to the western section of New York as a missionary. Methodism spread rapidly in that new country, as our pages show. Vannest had under his care, the next year after his arrival, the large Cayuga District, which he traveled two years.

He returned again to New Jersey in 1810, and labored on Gloucester Circuit. The following four years he had charge of the East Jersey District. He traveled six years longer on Salem, Freehold, Bergen, Gloucester, and New Mills Circuits, all in his native state. In 1821, after a laborious ministry of twenty-four years, he retired into the superannuated ranks of the Philadelphia Conference, and at the organization of the New Jersey Conference was placed in the same relation to that body. He "endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." His labors in New England, in Canada, in Western New York, and New Jersey, were instrumental in the rescue of hundreds of souls. He survived to the extreme age of ninety-one. No one who was a member of the Philadelphia Conference when he entered it was living when he died in 1850.

The returns of members amounted to 4,155, a gain of 1,216. Connecticut had 1,455; Rhode Island, 162; Massachusetts, 1,194; Maine, 936; New Hampshire, 122; Vermont, 286. Connecticut had gained 254; Rhode Island had lost 15; Massachusetts had gained 281; Maine, 320; New Hampshire, 30; Vermont, (which had made no previous returns,) 286. The aggregate in-

crease in New England this year was more than three times as great as that of all the rest of the Church throughout the republic and Canada. The local preachers scattered among the societies amounted about this time to twenty-five at least.[5] With such results the laborious itinerants wended their way from their scattered posts, with grateful hearts and good courage, to their Conferences at Readfield and Granville, in order to plan the work of another year.

The former is memorable as the first Methodist Conference held in Maine. It began the 29th of August, and was an occasion of no ordinary interest. Methodism, though recent in the province, had taken profound hold on the sympathies of the settlers, and hundreds flocked to the small village of Readfield to witness the first assembly of its pioneers in their new and wilderness country. The place was thronged with the devout, who came to enjoy the spiritual advantages of the occasion, and the worldly, who were there to reap gain from it. "Several came," says Lee, "in their carts, with cakes, etc., to sell. No one interrupted us in the meeting-house, but many were walking to and fro, and paid no attention to the meetings."

The session lasted two days, Wednesday and Thursday. Ten preachers were present: Timothy Merritt, John Brodhead, Robert Yallely, Aaron Humphrey, Roger Searle, Joshua Taylor, Jesse Stoneman, Enoch Mudge, and John Finnegan; Asbury made the tenth. On Wednesday "we were closely engaged all day," writes Lee, "much united in love and in the work of the ministry; we had some good accounts, from different places, of a gracious revival of religion." Timothy Merritt cheered them with news of the triumphs of the truth

[5] Lee's History, anno 1798.

along the banks of the Penobscot; Enoch Mudge, who had been appointed to Pleasant River, had spent much time with him, and they jointly extended the circuit into many new settlements; the word sped its way, and one hundred and fifty-three souls had been gathered into the new societies, besides hundreds of converts, who either entered other communions, or as yet none. Kennebec Circuit had heretofore yielded no returns, but now reported one hundred and five. On Bath Circuit about seventy had been added to the little flock. Such were some of the "good accounts" of which Lee speaks. Nearly one thousand Methodists had been raised up in the province, though but about four years had passed since Philip Wager was appointed as the first Methodist preacher to labor exclusively within its limits.

Wednesday was a "great day," says Asbury. The Conference began its usual business very early, and closed it by eight o'clock A. M., in order that the rest of the time might be devoted to public exercises. An immense throng had gathered in the village. At nine o'clock the doors of the new and yet unfinished chapel (the first erected in Maine) were thrown open for the "large number of Methodists, and none else." Shut in from the throng, they held a love-feast together. Representatives of their common cause were there from all the surrounding regions, and from several distant places. "It was a good time," says Lee; "they spoke freely and feelingly" of their Christian experience, and renewed their vows with God and each other. The multitude without heard their fervent ejaculations and exhilarating melodies, and waited impatiently for the public services.

At eleven o'clock the doors were opened. From "one thousand to eighteen hundred souls," says Asbury, at-

tempted to get into the building; it was a solid mass of human beings. The galleries, which were yet unfinished, cracked and broke under the pressure, producing much alarm, and slightly injuring a few; but the services proceeded. Asbury ascended the rude pulpit and addressed his itinerant brethren from 2 Cor. iv, 1, 2 "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not," etc.

Well could their great leader, bearing in his own person the marks of his excessive labors, exhort the pioneers of Methodism in Maine to "faint not" in their extraordinary privations and toils. They gathered strength from the veteran's words, and welcomed the daily journeys, the incessant preaching, the wintry storms, and the spiritual victories of another year. Lee tells us that it was a "good sermon," and that, though the bishop, before the meeting, appeared to be weak, yet during the discourse he waxed "strong and courageous." The ordination services followed, and were witnessed with great interest by the throng. Lee describes it as a scene of deep solemnity.

The ordination being over, Lee, whose heart was full, mounted the pulpit, and proclaimed to the multitude of Methodists present, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Rom. xvi, 20. A divine influence fell upon the assembly; tears flowed in all parts of the house. "My soul," he says, "was animated with the presence of the Lord. It was a precious time to many." He could not but feel profoundly under the associations of the scene; only five years before he wandered a solitary evangelist through the province, without a single Methodist to welcome him; now multitudes of them were rising up over its length and breadth, and spreading into bands, and these were but the be-

ginnings of a great work, which he unwaveringly believed would go on prosperously through all time.

Protracted as the services had been, there was still another exercise before they dispersed. They partook of the Lord's Supper together. It was, Lee tells us, "a most solemn time." More than two hundred persons communed. "I stood astonished," he exclaims, "at the sight! to see so many people at the Lord's table, when it is not quite five years since we came into this part of the world."

Thus closed the first Conference in Maine. The preachers immediately hastened to their appointments. Asbury was away the same day. Lee tarried to complete some unfinished business, "thankful to God for the privilege of being at the first Conference ever held in the province of Maine."

Let us now pass to the western session at Granville, Mass., held shortly afterward.

Asbury pressed on westward with his usual speed. He was at Portland the Sabbath after the Readfield Conference, (Sept. 1,) having rode "sixty miles in two days," under the heat of the sun, and over "desperate roads and rocks." He preached there in the "Widow Bynton's back room, to about," he says, "twenty-five persons, chiefly women; my subject was 2 Peter ii, 9. In the afternoon I preached to about double the number on Phil. iii, 8. I returned Sabbath evening to my very kind friend's house, Major Illsley's." The next day he traveled "thirty miles to Wells," on Tuesday forty-seven to Salisbury; on Thursday, 4, he reached Lynn, and the next day preached from Gal. v, 6, 7, 8. He started the following day for Boston, but the retreat at Waltham, in the house of Bemis, presented a stronger charm. "The heat," he says, "was excessive, and the

sun met me in the face, so that I was almost ready to faint in the carriage. I changed my mind, and concluded to come on to Waltham, and spend another Sabbath. I missed my way a little, but came in about seven o'clock, riding, since two o'clock, twenty miles." He preached there the next day (Sabbath) twice. It was the finest portion of the year, and the retirement and beauty of the farm tempted him to delay, a temptation which it would have been better for his health oftener to indulge. He tarried three days, reposing on Monday and Tuesday, but on Wednesday renewed his journey, and preached at Weston. The few brethren of that society had been prospered somewhat, and had built a chapel, "a well designed building," says Asbury. He went into their new pulpit and encouraged them from 1 Cor. xv, 58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Hastening forward, he reached Granville by Tuesday, 18.

The Conference at Granville began at eight o'clock on Wednesday, September 19, 1798, three weeks after the session at Readfield. It was the largest assemblage of Methodist preachers which had ever been convened in New England, about fifty being present, many of them from the neighboring circuits of New York. "We had," says Asbury, "many weighty and deliberate conversations on interesting subjects, in much plainness and moderation;" and he tells us that they "had more good accounts of the work of God in different circuits." Here, as at Readfield, encouraging tidings were brought from all directions. On Granville Circuit, where the Conference sat, more than forty souls had been received into the new communion. Pittsfield

Circuit reported a gain of more than seventy-five. Michael Coate could speak of the triumphs of the truth on Middletown Circuit, where great numbers had been awakened and converted, and forty-two were received into the Church. Shadrack Bostwick had seen remarkable displays of the divine influence on New London Circuit; the societies had been invigorated on all sides, and about one hundred members had been added to them. David Buck had good news from Reading Circuit; refreshing showers had fallen through its length and breadth, and an addition of seventy-three members had been made to its classes. Methodism had taken root on Martha's Vineyard, and Joshua Hall reported thirteen members, the first returns from that island. The society in Provincetown having endured persecutions courageously had at last prevailed, its chapel was erected, and during the last year scores had been converted to God within its walls, a gain of more than one hundred was reported at the present Conference. Ralph Williston brought cheering news from Vermont; more than two hundred had been received into the new societies of that state the past year.[6] There had been, in fine, general prosperity in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont; and, within the range of circuits represented by their pastors in the present Conference, there had been an increase of about one thousand members.[7]

Ten new preachers were received at this session. "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" exclaims Lee, as he records the fact. Among these young men were Epaphras Kibby, Daniel Webb, Asa Heath, and also those two remarkable men, so generally known alike for their

[6] Lee's Mem., p. 240. Vermont had made no returns previous to this Conference.

[7] Ibid.

great labors and great eccentricities, Billy Hibbard and Lorenzo Dow, the latter after no little opposition, as we have seen. Twelve were ordained. The public services were impressive; Lee speaks of "a blessed time in preaching," when preachers and people were melted into tears. The Conference closed on Friday, 21; the next day Asbury and Lee "began their flight," as the latter calls it. They were accompanied by twelve of the preachers, who had been designated to the neighboring circuits of New York. By Sunday afternoon they had crossed the boundary, and the bishop was preaching the same evening at Dover.

William Beauchamp was a man of genuine greatness, one of nature's noblemen and God's elect. He was born in the County of Kent, Del., April 26, 1772. His father, a respectable Methodist preacher, removed in the year 1788 or '89 to the western part of the state of Virginia, settled on the Monongahela River, and after residing there six or eight years, again emigrated to little Kanhawa River, in Wood County, Va., where he and Rees Wolfe, another preacher, formed societies. At an early period of his life Beauchamp had religious impressions. When about fifteen or sixteen years old he became a member of the Church. Some time after he began to exhort. He was sent to a seminary of learning, and acquired a knowledge of English and Latin grammar. In 1790 he taught school in Monongahela. At the age of nineteen he began to preach. In 1793, the twenty-first year of his age, he left his father's house on the Monongahela, and traveled under the presiding elder. In 1794 he was stationed on the Alleghany Circuit, which he traveled two years. The next year, 1796, he was appointed to Pittsburgh Circuit. In 1797 he was stationed in New York, and in 1798 in Boston.

From thence, in 1799, he was removed to Provincetown, Mass. In 1800 he was stationed on Nantucket. George Cannon, then a located preacher, had preached there with considerable success. As the prospect appeared flattering, he solicited the aid of the traveling ministry, and Beauchamp was sent to his help. He had not been in this station more than six months when a society of between seventy and eighty members was raised up, and, before he left it, a large and commodious meeting-house was built.[8]

In the following year, 1801, he located, having married. In 1807 he removed from Nantucket, and settled near his father, in Wood County, (Va.,) on the little Kanhawa. He continued there, preaching with great popularity and usefulness, till 1815, when he removed to Chilicothe, Ohio, to take the editorial charge of the "Western Christian Monitor," the only periodical publication at that time in the Church. He had previously published his "Essays on the Truth of the Christian Religion," a work of decided merit in the estimation of good critics. He edited the Monitor with conspicuous ability, and preached meanwhile at and about Chilicothe with eminent success. The whole community paid him the homage due to his great talents and exalted character, and a remarkable revival of religion, which occurred soon after his removal, is attributed to his previous instrumentality. He was called the "Demosthenes of the West."

In 1817 he removed to Mount Carmel, Ill., where he was employed in founding a settlement. He showed himself the truly great man in all the details of this new business, planning public measures and economical arrangements; devising mechanical improvements, for

[8] Meth. Mag., 1825.

which he had a rare genius; directing the instructions of the youth, and simplifying its modes; ministering as pastor to the congregation, and meanwhile advancing in his own personal studies and improvement. In 1822 he re-entered the itinerant ministry in the Missouri Conference. He labored successfully one year at St. Louis, and in 1823 was appointed presiding elder on Indiana District, which included eleven vast circuits, and was nearly coextensive with the bounds of the state. He was sent, the same year, a delegate to the General Conference at Baltimore, and such was the impression produced by his remarkable character and talents that he lacked but two votes of an election to the episcopal office. He would undoubtedly have been elected were it not for the objection that so large a portion of his life had been spent out of the itinerancy.

On his return to his district he was seized by an old complaint, an affection of the liver, and after suffering patiently for about six weeks, fell asleep in Christ with full hope of immortality. His biographer says: "He was conscious of his approaching dissolution, and was fully prepared to meet it. Eternity appeared to be opened to his view; his work was done, and he was ready to go. A short time before he expired he prayed for an easy passage through the gates of death. The Lord heard his prayer; and he died so easy, that he glided into eternity almost before it was perceived he was gone. Thus expired our great and good brother, William Beauchamp, in Paoli, Orange County, Indiana, on the seventh day of October, 1824, in the fifty-third year of his age."[9] The same writer describes his manner of preaching: "He had a little stoop of the shoulders, but, when speaking in public, his gestures were natural

[9] Meth. Mag., 1825.

and easy. His voice was remarkably soft in social conversation, but in argument energetic. In his preaching, when holding out the promises and the invitations of the gospel, there was a tenderness, a sweetness in his voice, produced frequently by gentle breaks, as if the rising sympathies of his soul obstructed in some degree his utterance; when a gentle thrilling sensation appeared to move the listening multitude, all bending forward to catch every sentence or word as it fell from his lips. This peculiarity has frequently been admired. But when he became argumentative, and discussed doctrinal points, or when false doctrines were attacked, the tone of his voice was elevated, his whole system became nerved, and his voice assumed a deep hollow tone, and then soon became elevated to its highest key, and fell like peals of thunder on the ears of the listening assembly. On one occasion the force of his powerful eloquence was fully demonstrated; it was on a subject of controversy. His antagonist, who had sat and listened for some length of time to arguments too powerful for him to answer, began to look as if the voice which he now heard came from another world, through the shadow of a man. He rose, apparently with a view to leave the house; but being so overcome, he staggered, caught by the railing, reeled, and fell to his seat, and there sat overwhelmed and confounded, until the discourse was concluded, when he quietly stepped from the house. His manner of preaching was plain. He seldom divided his subject into different heads, but took the natural division of the text. His sermons were deep, and made a lasting impression upon the mind, because they were both practical and doctrinal. Holiness was his theme. There was seldom a shout raised in the assembly under his preaching, but always strict atten-

tion was paid to his discourses; every eye was fixed upon the speaker, and frequently the people were all bathed in tears."

Beauchamp was an arduous student. His early conveniences for mental culture were quite limited; but besides the usual variety of English studies, he became a master of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. While yet residing on the Monongahela, where the schoolmaster had never yet penetrated, he was so smitten with the love of knowledge that, when the family had retired to bed, he would stretch himself on the floor before the hearth, and, with torchlights for candles, spend most of the night in communion with his favorite authors.

His style of preaching is said to have been severely chaste and dignified; no attempts at meretricious ornament or imaginative effect, no boisterous declamation or far-fetched novelties of thought or diction, but a stern energy of intellect, logical conclusiveness, a solemn feeling, gradually rising to a commanding and sometimes overpowering force, were the characteristics of this truly great divine.

Another conspicuous name appears in the list of the New England appointments the present year, that of Daniel Webb, who became the oldest effective Methodist preacher in the world. He was born in Canterbury, Windham County, Conn., April, 1778. The Methodist itinerants began to preach in that town about 1793 or 1794. He early heard Mudge, Pickering, Bostwick, and Merritt. They preached at the house of Captain Ephraim Lyon, in the southwest part of Canterbury. Very soon a class was formed, and the place was made one of the Sabbath appointments of the New London Circuit. "I have heard," he writes, "my father say

that James Coleman was his spiritual father, having been awakened by his instrumentality, though converted under the labors of Enoch Mudge. I well remember the morning when he addressed his family, telling them what the Lord had done for his soul, and expressing his conviction of the duty of family devotion, which he then commenced, and continued, as he was able, while he lived." [10]

Young Webb often had serious reflections. At length, he writes, "a young woman, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, came to my father's house to work as a tailoress. She was faithful to her Lord, and religion was the theme of her conversation. Having an opportunity one day, she said to me, 'My young friend, what do you think of religion?' I replied, 'I think it to be a good and a necessary thing for all persons before they die.' "Then,' said she, 'what objection have you to seeking it now?' 'If I could have my young companions with me I should be willing to seek it now,' I replied. She then said, 'My dear friend, do not wait for your companions; you may perhaps be in your grave before they will turn to the Lord.' These words were as a nail in a sure place. They arrested my attention. They took hold of my heart. I began to pray, God be merciful to me a sinner! I saw that it would be just in God to cast me off and send me to hell. I was led to cry the more for mercy; and in about four weeks from the time of her faithfulness to me, in a little prayer-meeting, the Lord spoke peace to my soul; and the next day, in a woods, he gave me a sealing evidence of my acceptance with him, and I went on my way rejoicing. This was in the year 1797, and in the month of August." The primitive Methodists were particular in such dates.

[10] Letter to the author.

In less than a year he was "exhorting" on the circuit. Bostwick called him out to Middletown Circuit, (Conn.,) and there he preached his first sermon. In 1798, received by the Conference, he was appointed to Granville Circuit, which was then two hundred miles in circumference, including the towns of Granville, Granby, Suffield, Westfield, West Springfield, Southampton, Northampton, Cummington, Ashfield, Buckland, Worthington, Dalton, Partridgefield, Washington, Pittsfield, Lee, Tyringham, Sandisfield, Blanford, Chester, and several others. "We had," he writes, "to cross the Green Mountains twice in each round. I frequently had to dismount my horse, and break through the snow banks to get him along. We preached almost every day, besides visiting, and attending prayer and class-meetings, so that our labors were very considerable My next appointment, 1799, by the direction of the presiding elder, George Pickering, was Sandwich, Mass., instead of Martha's Vineyard, to which the Conference sent me. This was a two weeks' circuit. The Sabbath appointments were Sandwich Town and Monument. The societies were small, and the encouragement but little, the germ only of the present state of things there. After laboring there about three months, the presiding elder directed me to Hawke, now Danville, in the southeasterly part of New Hampshire, where there were no Methodist Churches formed; but the ground had been partially broken up by George Pickering, Ralph Williston, John Nichols, and perhaps others. Epaphras Kibby was also sent into that country about the same time, but he labored principally in Poplin and East Kingston. He occasionally visited me and I him. We tried to encourage and assist each other in our hard labors and privations. We had been there

but a few months before the Lord blessed our efforts, and a class was formed first in Hawke and then in Poplin, and at a later period in East Kingston.

At the next Conference, which was in Lynn, June, 1800, he was ordained a deacon by Bishop Whatcoat, and stationed on Norridgewock Circuit, in the district of Maine. That circuit included the towns of Starks, Norridgewock, Canaan, Fairfield, Anson, and the settlements then called Industry, New Portland, Barnardstown, Carryatuck Falls, etc. He also visited Vassalborough, and preached there once or twice. "I went," he says, "very reluctantly to the circuit, having heard a great many frightful stories about the country. Setting aside the disgrace of it, perhaps I should have felt but little worse if I had been doomed to the state prison for a year. But we do not always know what is best for us. It proved to be one of the happiest and most prosperous years of my ministerial life. There was a good revival in Norridgewock and in Industry. I left the circuit with reluctance, 'sorrowing most of all' that probably 'I should see their faces no more.'"

At the Conference which sat in Lynn, 1801, he was appointed to labor in Salisbury and parts adjacent; also in 1802, in the same regions. In 1803 he was stationed in Marblehead, and in 1804 in Hawke and vicinity. His labors extended also to Salem, in New Hampshire. At the next Conference, 1805, he was stationed in Lynn, Mass., and preached in the old Lee meeting-house, which stood at the east end of the Common. The established Church of the village had not yet relented in its hostility, and menaces of a prosecution had been uttered against his predecessor, Peter Jayne, for marrying one or more couples, members of his own

congregation. Asbury took measures, in the appointment of Webb, to meet this embarrassing difficulty by imitating some of the forms of a "regular settlement." "He told the Church," says Webb, "that he had appointed me to be their pastor. They signified their acceptance of me as such, and he gave me a charge and token of fellowship." Afterward the preachers stationed in Boston and Marblehead, with their people, went through similar ceremonies, and the objections to the legality of marriage, solemnized by Methodist ministers, ceased.

He continued in Lynn two years, and at the Conference in Boston, 1807, was appointed, with George Pickering, to that city. The Conference rose on Saturday, and he returned immediately to his family at Lynn. Asbury also went thither. Early the next morning a committee, consisting of three of the chief men of the Boston Church, arrived to remonstrate with the bishop against the substitution of Webb in the place of Merwin, who had been in the city the preceding year. "It will not do," replied the bishop; "Merwin will die if he stays there; he must go to Newport." The committee returned in no very agreeable mood. At first Webb was reluctantly received; "but," he says, "Pickering and I went to our work with one heart, and hand in hand. He was foremost in every good work, and I endeavored to follow on. We were cordially received after a few weeks. The Lord blessed our labors, and many souls were brought to the knowledge of the truth, considerably over one hundred, I believe. Our brethren in the ministry, Thomas C. Pierce, and Thomas W. Tucker, were converted this year." The Church was in debt three or four hundred dollars for the expenses of the last year. The debt and all the expenses of the current year were

paid, and, as a society, at the conclusion of the year they owed nothing.

He remained another year in the city, with Martin Ruter as colleague. The Church prospered greatly. The evening before he left it for his next year's appointment the members pressed into his house, with blessings on their tongues and in their hands. Many had been converted during the year, among whom were several who became preachers; fiscal embarrassments had been thrown off, and all the interests of the society were invigorated.

His subsequent appointments were in various parts of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and he lived, beloved and venerated for his unblemished character and long services, down to 1867, when he died in the full assurance of hope. He was noted for the brevity, perspicuity, systematic arrangement, and evangelical richness of his discourses, his unpretending but cordial manners, and his steadfast interest for his Church.

Epaphras Kibby survived down to our day, one of the patriarchs of the New England itinerants. He was converted under the ministry of George Roberts. "One sermon," he writes,[11] "from this powerful, eloquent man was all-sufficient, under the Divine Spirit, to rouse my guilty soul, and to extort the cry, 'What shall I do to be saved?'" It is a little remarkable that the sermon which produced this effect was on a controversial occasion. An heretical clergyman visited the town; Roberts heard him in the Court-house, and perceiving the dangerous plausibility of his discourse, announced a rejoinder in the evening at the same place; a crowd assembled to witness the rencontre. Roberts was a man of great earnestness and power; he not only confounded the logic

[11] Letter to the author.

of his antagonist, utterly baffling him before the assembly, but dealt home such resistless admonitions to the latter, that some thirteen or fourteen young men were awakened on the spot. "I felt," says Kibby, "as I never did before. I prayed, I tried to weep, but I could not. I tried to repent, but my heart was as hard as stone. And thus, for three weeks, I went with my head bowed down like a bulrush, attending all the meetings, sometimes spending the whole night on my knees in prayer, carrying about a body of sin and death, until I once rose up in the meeting to tell the sympathizing Christians that in my case there was no hope. But before my lips pronounced the words the power of God fell upon me. I sunk into my chair. Rays of light, heavenly and divine, fell upon my dark understanding. The love of God filled my whole soul; the Holy Ghost descended upon the people, and the shout of a king was among us. O what a day! a day never to be forgotten. My captivity was turned and Israel was glad."

This was in 1793, and in the sixteenth year of his age. In 1798 he was pressed into the itinerant service at the Granville Conference, though he had never attempted to preach a sermon, but had only "exhorted." "Go, my son," said Asbury to him, "and God be with you. Do the best you can; an angel cannot do better." His first appointment was on Sandwich Circuit, Mass., and thus began one of the longest ministerial careers in our annals, though it was interrupted at intervals by broken health and a "supernumerary relation" to the Conference, and concluded by a protracted "superannuation." He traveled in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Maine. He formed the first Methodist society in New Bedford, Mass., and also in Hallowell, Me., and

occupied, with distinction, the stations of Boston, Portland, and New Bedford. He suffered the early hardships of the Maine circuits courageously, and helped effectually to lay the foundations of Methodism through much of that country at the beginning of the century. When appointed there in 1800, it seemed a distant and appalling field to him; but he was accompanied and cheered on the way by a convoy of brave-spirited itinerants, Merritt, Heath, Webb, and others, all bound to eastern circuits. When he arrived he found a vast sphere of labor before him. Readfield Circuit then included Monmouth, Winthrop, Readfield, Kent's Hill, Montville, Vienna, New Sharon, Farmington, Strong, Bethel, the extreme settlement on Sandy River, New Vineyard, Wilton, Jay, Livermore, Fayette, Wayne, Leeds, and Green, besides many smaller appointments. He preached and traveled every day, except one Saturday in each month. The roads were new, and at times dangerous to man and beast. In one section of the circuit he had to pass through a forest six miles in extent, at first with a guide, and subsequently by marks upon the trees. Frequently he was obliged to cross frozen streams when the ice would not bear his horse; but while he himself walked upon it, the latter, led by his hand, had to break a way, cutting himself with ice, and coming forth exhausted and bloody from the struggle. In other seasons these streams had to be forded or swum, often at the risk of life. In those remote regions he usually slept in log-cabins, through the roofs of which the stars shone upon his slumbers and the snow fell upon his bed, forming a cover by morning several inches thick.[12] Again his spirit sunk within him. Such exposures and labors seemed impracticable; he felt that he must retreat.

[12] Letter to the author.

but God interposed for him. When about to give up in despair, a marvelous revival broke out in the circuit; he took fresh courage and went on his way rejoicing.

This event was of too remarkable a character to be omitted here. While doubting and praying, respecting his duty to remain any longer, a young gentleman of Monmouth, of high position in society, heard him accidentally at a neighboring village, and on returning home reported among his neighbors an exalted opinion of the young preacher's talents and character, and particularly urged his own wife to go and hear him when he should arrive in their town. He himself made no pretensions to piety; his lady had been deeply serious some time before, but had apparently lost her religious convictions. Kibby went to Monmouth to preach in the Congregational Church. As he sat in the desk waiting, a divine afflatus seemed to descend on him and the gathering people. He has been heard to say that he never before nor since witnessed a more direct and remarkable agency of the Spirit of God. A well-dressed lady arrived, and took a seat, tremblingly, near the door, but where the whole assembly saw her. Without an audible expression her countenance and demeanor exhibited unutterable feeling, and the whole audience soon seemed to share it. The preacher proceeded with his discourse with unusual interest and solemnity. As he advanced, exhibiting the mercy of God, the feeling of awe which had hitherto absorbed the assembly seemed to change, a glad and grateful emotion sped through the mass, a bright and glowing expression shone on their faces; and the lady, with streaming tears and overflowing heart, found peace with God, and seemed transfigured before them.

When they rose to sing, she fell insensible under her intense feelings; her husband, near her, was smitten down, and dropped upon his seat; the presence of God seemed to overshadow the place, and the assembly was overwhelmed. The lady herself became a devoted mem ber of the Church; her husband, General M'Clellan, was the man who invited Kibby. He subsequently was converted, and their family was long known on the Kennebec for its affluent and Christian hospitality, and its devotion to the interests of Methodism. It afterward became the germ of the Methodist Church in Bath. The influence of this remarkable meeting spread like a flame through the town and neighboring villages, and, indeed, more or less over the circuit. The sinking heart of the preacher was fortified forever.

These scenes at Monmouth led to the introduction of Methodism into Hallowell. A young man at the former, but belonging to the latter, entreated Kibby to visit the town and preach to its inhabitants. He consented, passed into the village, procured a school-house, and had a large congregation; but at the end of the service his hearers all retired, leaving him alone without an invitation to any of their homes, or an intimation of their approval or disapproval of his doctrines. He felt disappointed, mortified, and mounting his horse rode four miles to Augusta for a supper, believing that he had erred in going to Hallowell. On arriving at Augusta some gentlemen of high respectability, who admired his talents, appointed a meeting for him in a hall. When he entered it he found an apparently selected audience. After the sermon one of the hearers rose and said, "I approve these doctrines and esteem this man;" and throwing a dollar on the table he added, "you, gentlemen, may do likewise." A shower of silver dollars

came down upon the table; the preacher refused them, but he was urged and compelled to receive them. It was no superfluous bounty, but a most opportune providence, meeting necessities which could hardly have otherwise been sustained. But a more cheering incident followed. Before he left the hall he was compensated, somewhat, for his mortifying treatment at Hallowell. A man, trembling with emotion, took him by the hand and inquired, "When, sir, are you coming again to Hallowell?" "Never, sir," replied the preacher. "Do, do come once more," rejoined the stranger, with tears, "for your discourse there, to-day, has awakened my guilty soul." Unexpected results of one day!

Kibby saw the hand of God in these things. He sent back by the stranger an appointment at Hallowell for four weeks afterward, the time of his next return to that part of the circuit. When he arrived he found that the awakened man had been converted. The house was crowded, and he was embarrassed with invitations to hospitable homes; he tarried the next day, and spent it in visiting from house to house, and nearly every family he called upon he found under the awakening influence of the Divine Spirit. A revival broke out which spread through the whole population, and the first Methodist society of Hallowell was formed. The two first persons, a man and his wife, converted in this extraordinary reformation, presented their two sons to him for baptism. They were twins, and scarcely distinguishable. He offered them specially to God in prayer, by that holy rite. One of them now sleeps in his grave in Africa, the first foreign missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The other became a preacher of Methodism in New England.

In 1841 he was reported among the "superannuated"

in the New England Conference, and remained on that honored roll till his death in 1865, when he departed, exclaiming, "Glory to God! glory to God!" after a ministry of sixty-seven years.[13] He was tall, erect, and slight in person, extremely neat in dress, and venerable in appearance. His talents were of a very superior order. His imagination furnished him with vivid illustrations, always abundant, chaste, and appropriate; his reasoning was strikingly perspicuous, direct, and conclusive; his language remarkable for both elegance and force. Though he never used notes in the pulpit, yet a large portion of his sermons were fully written, the cause, probably, of that rich and correct diction which so eminently characterized even his impromptu addresses. He was a fond lover of good literature, and abounded in general knowledge. His judgment was always cautious and safe, his zeal steady and effective, his attachment to the doctrines and economy of Methodism unwavering amid many calls and temptations to more comfortable stations in other communions. Without ambition or pretension, he attained to a rare popularity as a preacher in the days of his vigor. He accomplished distinguished service in the Church, and is endeared to it, in most of New England, by precious recollections.

Joshua Soule, though not named in the Minutes till the next year, began to travel about this time, under the presiding elder of Maine District. He occupies a distinguished position in our denominational history. He was born in Bristol, Hancock County, Me., August 1, 1781. About 1795 his family removed to Avon, then a recent settlement on Sandy River; the Readfield Circuit extended to this remote frontier, and

[13] Minutes, 1865.

Enoch Mudge and other traveling evangelists occasionally penetrated to it, sounding the word of life among its sparse habitations. "The settlement," says Mudge,[14] "was new, and his father's house unfinished. Joshua had a precocious mind, a strong memory, a manly and dignified turn, although his appearance was exceedingly rustic." Youthful and untutored as he was, the doctrines of the gospel, as exhibited by the preachers of Methodism, arrested his attention, and commended themselves to his opening intellect. In June, 1797, after seeking reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, with a broken and contrite heart, he found peace in believing. The chivalric zeal and energy of the Methodist itinerants who had brought the word of life to his distant home, found a responsive sympathy in his youthful heart, and was congenial with those habits of adventure and exertion to which his life on the frontier had habituated him. He longed to share their heroic labors, and to go forth "into all the world" proclaiming the joyful sound of the gospel. The Divine Spirit selected and anointed him for signal achievements in the Church. Joshua Taylor, who was presiding elder in Maine about this time, perceived beneath the rudeness and rusticity of his appearance those elements of promise which have since distinguished his career, and encouraged him immediately to enter upon his ministerial labors. He was then (1798) but about seventeen years of age. An academy would doubtless have better befitted him, and would have guaranteed a full repayment, in increased usefulness, for the delay required by a few years of study; but there was absolutely none within his reach, and indefatigable habits of application and observation were at least a partial substitute. He accompanied

[14] Letter to the writer.

Taylor around the district, exhorting after his sermons, exciting general interest by his youth and devotion, and not a little by the contrast which he presented of rustic awkwardness with extraordinary though unpolished talents.

He was received at the next Conference, and appointed, with Timothy Merritt, to Portland Circuit. Merritt, still young and vigorous, was a congenial mind, thirsting alike for knowledge and holiness, and their reciprocal influence could not but be mutually profitable, so far as their continual travels and labors would admit. After staying one year more in Maine, during which he traveled a circuit on Union River, he passed to Massachusetts, and was appointed in 1801, 1802, and 1803, respectively, to Sandwich, Needham, and Nantucket. In 1804 he returned to his native state, and traveled two years as presiding elder of the district of Maine. This was the only district in the province at that period; he had, therefore, the oversight of the entire Methodist interest of that large section of New England. Thirteen circuits were under his superintendence. His sermons at this time are reported to have been distinguished by that breadth of view and majesty of style which, in later years, notwithstanding some abatement through the variety of his responsibilities, have continued to mark with greatness his pulpit efforts. His word was oftentimes in irresistible power, bearing down upon the large assemblies which collected to hear him, like the storm on the bending forest. He shared fully, during his presiding eldership in Maine, the sufferings of the early itinerancy: long journeys on horseback, over new roads, through vast forests, in the storms of winter; fording dangerous streams, lodging in exposed log-cabins, preaching almost daily, and receiving a pecuniary

compensation scarcely sufficient for traveling expenses and clothing. These were the tests, however, which made strong men of the Methodist preachers of that day.

Such was the prosperity and extension of the district during these two years, that in 1806 it was divided, and its eastern portion formed into a new one, named after the Kennebec River, along which it chiefly extended. Soule took charge of the latter during 1806 and 1807. The following four years he traveled again the other section, then called Portland District. During this period Martin Ruter, Epaphras Kibby, Ebenezer Blake, Charles Virgin, Daniel Fillmore, Samuel Hillman, and others of familiar name in the New England Churches, were under his guidance. They had hard struggles but glorious victories in spreading the truth through the wilds of Maine. In 1812 Soule returned to Massachusetts, and was the colleague of Daniel Webb at Lynn; but in the following year was back again, traveling his former district on the Kennebec. He continued there till 1816, when he was appointed Book Agent at New York. He did good service for the Church in this capacity during four years, especially by the publication of the Methodist Magazine, the appearance of which, "even at this late period," says the historian of the Church, "was hailed by the friends of literature and religion as the harbinger of brighter days to our Zion." Soule was its editor; his original articles were sensible in thought and dignified in style, though betraying often those minute intellectual defects which self-education, however advantageous in other respects, seldom eradicates. Its selections were peculiarly attractive and instructive, and such was its success, that ten thousand subscribers were obtained the first year.

Bangs took Soule's place at the Book Rooms in 1820, and the latter was stationed in New York city, where he labored two years with Hunt, Hibbard, Spicer, and Summerfield. The following two years he spent in Baltimore, and in 1824 was elected to the episcopacy in the forty-third year of his age, and the twenty-sixth of his ministry. For forty-three years he has sustained the onerous responsibilities of that office, traversing the continent, from the Penobscot in Maine, to the Colorado in Texas, presiding in Conferences, visiting in long and perilous journeys the Indian Missions, and energetically laboring, by the many facilities of his position, for the promotion of the Church.

In the discussions of the General Conference of 1844, which resulted in the division of the Church, he attached himself to the party formed by the representatives of the South, and has since identified himself with that section of the denomination.

Bishop Soule was erect, tall, and slight in person, and dignified in his bearing; his forehead high, but narrow, his voice strong and commanding. In the pulpit he was slow, long in his sermons—usually occupying an hour and a half for each; elaborate, almost entirely destitute of imagination or figurative illustrations, but strongly fortified in the main positions of his subject, and vigorous in his style. His discourses showed more breadth than depth, but were often overwhelmingly impressive. The dignity of his bearing, frequently verging on majesty itself, gave to his sermons, at times, an imposing solemnity; but on occasions less congruous with it, had the disadvantage of appearing, to the fastidious at least, pompous and repulsive.

He did great services and endured great privations for Methodism. Northern Methodists, however they

may regret his later measures, will ever recall him with gratitude and respect as one of their veteran pioneers, and a noble son of their soil. He died, near Nashville, Tenn., March 6, 1867, in the full assurance of faith.

The year had been prosperous, though not so generally as the preceding one. The new circuit of Vergennes, in Vermont, which was projected at the Granville Conference, had been the scene of a great reformation. It comprehended all the State of Vermont, between the Green Mountains and Lake Champlain, and required incredible travels and labors. It was a field for an evangelical Hercules, and such was Joseph Mitchell, its itinerant. His ministrations were in power, his zeal never flagged; preaching night and day, traveling at the rate of nearly six thousand miles a year, and suffering extreme privations, to which were superadded not a few instances of violent persecution, he overcame all obstacles, and "the word ran and was glorified" through that extensive region. Hundreds of souls were converted, many of whom entered other Churches; but at least eighty-eight were received into classes, some of which he now formed for the first time. The other circuit in Vermont, (Vershire,) which included all the state east of the mountains, had shared this prosperity. Under the labors of Joseph Crawford sixty-five had been received into the societies, besides vast numbers who were awakened, but had not yet joined the new communion. Three new circuits had been formed in this single state, namely, Essex, Windsor, and Whitingham. The former returned one hundred and ten members, the latter fifty-five. Methodism had scattered its germs extensively through Vermont, and small classes, the nuclei of subsequent Churches, had been formed in all directions.

Joseph Snelling had labored successfully on Martha's Vineyard. The number of Methodists on that island, though still small, was nearly doubled since the Granville Conference. He had also visited Nantucket during the year, and witnessed the conversion of many souls. Great results had been reaped on Pittsfield Circuit. The eccentric but sincere Lorenzo Dow, who had been admitted to the ministry at Granville Conference, and appointed to Cambridge Circuit, N. Y., was transferred during the year to Pittsfield. Notwithstanding his singularities, he was remarkably successful. In many places he was repulsed by the societies, and denied the hospitalities of the families which usually entertained the circuit preachers; but his unwearied labors produced in time a profound impression. He sometimes rode more than fifty miles, and preached five sermons, besides leading several classes, in a single day. The astonished people, witnessing his earnestness and usefulness, soon treated him more respectfully, and a general revival ensued. In Pittsfield, where at first he received no invitation to their homes, he says, "I visited it extensively, and had the satisfaction to see the Methodists and others stirred up to serve God. Now they offered me presents, which I refused, saying, The next preachers invite home and treat well, for my sake. In Alford," he says, in his characteristic style, "I preached Methodism, inside and outside. The brethren here treated me very coldly at first, so I was necessitated to pay for my horse-keeping for five weeks, and, being confined a few days with the ague and fever, the man of the house not being a Methodist, I paid him for my accommodation. I had said in public that God would bless my labors there, which made the people watch me for evil, and not for good. I visited the whole neighborhood from

house to house, which made a great uproar among the people. However, the fire kindled; the society got enlivened, and several others who were stumbling at the unexemplary walk of professors, were convinced and brought to find the realities of religion for themselves. When leaving this place I was offered pay for my expenses; but I refused it, saying, If you wish to do me good, treat the coming preachers better than you have treated me. Now the eyes of many were enlightened to see a free salvation offered to all mankind. In Lennox the society and people were much prejudiced at first, but the former were quickened afresh."

This eccentric man left the circuit in a state of universal prosperity; one hundred and eighty had been added to the societies, and about five hundred more "were under conviction for sin." The sensation was wonderful, and some, to our day, stood up in the Church as witnesses of his usefulness. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man."

Extensive reformations had prevailed in Maine. The aggregate of members in all the New England states was four thousand nine hundred and fifty-four, and the increase of the year was about eight hundred, more than two thirds of the increase of the entire denomination. The gains were chiefly in Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Rhode Island still lingered tardily in the rear. It returned but one hundred and ninety-six members, a gain of only thirty-four during the year, a declension of twelve from the number reported four years before. About seven years had passed since the first regular appointment was made in that state, and but three since Nicholas Snethen traveled the first circuit in Vermont, yet the former scarcely reports two

hundred members, while the latter returns six hundred and four. New Hampshire, though now overspread with Methodists, also gave a reluctant admission to its hardy itinerants. But one circuit had yet been formed in the state. Three years had passed since Philip Wager entered it as the first Methodist preacher regularly sent thither. Elijah Bachelor reported the present year but one hundred and thirty-one Methodists within its limits, a gain of but nine since the last returns, and of but sixty-three in three years. Methodism had to struggle into that state. Long rides, bad roads, hard fare, exposure to the weather by night in log-cabins, to perils by day in fording creeks and rivers, were not the only trials to which the laborious preachers were subjected. They were generally assailed by other sects, and sometimes by the mob.

Similar scenes were not uncommon in Vermont as well as New Hampshire. The hardy settlers of these wilderness regions chose a more summary, but less vexatious method of suppressing the new sect than their more staid and more obstinate neighbors of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The latter imprisoned, seized property, anathematized from the pulpit, and did so with most patient pertinacity for years, while the former shook their fists and swore terribly against the intruders on one day, and on the next were weeping and falling as dead men under their preaching. New Hampshire has since become a fruitful field of Methodism.

There was no Conference in New England in 1793; the New York Conference made the appointments for the Eastern States. Elijah Hedding, though his name does not appear in the Minutes till a later date, commenced traveling this year by the direction of the presiding elder. He was born in Dutchess County, N. Y.,

June 7, 1780, but removed with his parents, at about his tenth year, to Starksborough, Vt. The Methodist itinerants had not yet penetrated thither; but an aged Methodist and his wife, a "mother in Israel," had removed to that town from Connecticut, and, though remote from any members of their chosen communion, and several miles from any church whatever, they let their light so shine that their neighbors saw their good works, and glorified their Father which is in heaven. The Church is indebted for the services of this distinguished man to the instrumentality of that elect lady. Meetings were opened in her humble dwelling two or three years before the arrival of the itinerants. There was no one in the neighborhood, at first, capable of praying in public, except herself and her husband, who was a devoted Christian of moderate abilities. They induced young Hedding, then about sixteen years old, to assist them in their Sabbath services. Though uninterested in religion, he consented to read a sermon every Sunday to the assembled neighbors, the good man of the house beginning and concluding the exercises with singing and prayer. The latter was abundantly furnished with Wesley's works and other Methodist publications; by his public Sabbath readings, Hedding became thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines of Methodism, and was so struck with their evangelical richness and practical appropriateness, that he soon read all the books in the cottage of the pious couple. He has been heard to say that this was the best theological training he ever enjoyed. His first permanent religious impressions were produced by the conversations of the Christian matron. She perceived his promising talents, and strong moral susceptibility. Hoping that he might be providentially called to important

services in the Church, she conversed with him frequently on subjects of religion, and succeeded at last in awakening in his mind a deep concern for his spiritual safety. About this time the old Vergennes Circuit was formed, and took in the town of Starksborough; Joseph Mitchell, a man mighty in word and in doctrine, opportunely visited the place. Hedding heard him preach, his convictions were deepened, and as he returned to his home he retired into a forest, and, kneeling down by a large tree, covenanted with God to live and die in his service, whatever might be the sacrifice involved in the resolution. Soon after he heard Mitchell again; the discourse was one of remarkable power; it disclosed to him, in a manner he had never yet perceived, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the peril of the unrenewed soul. He was now seized with unutterable anxiety, and for several weeks gave himself to prayer with anguish and tears, night and day; divine truth shone upon his conscience in all its reality, and he trembled under the sense of his sinfulness and danger. Such, usually, are the profound convictions and spiritual travail of those whom God designs for important purposes in his Church.

He looked with longing solicitude for the next visit of the itinerant evangelist, who soon arrived and preached in the house where the youthful penitent had been accustomed to read the sermons of Wesley. After the discourse a class-meeting was held, as usual, by the preacher; on ascertaining the deep convictions of young Hedding, he proposed that special prayer should be made in his behalf; the itinerant and the pious cottagers bowed around him, and continued in supplication till peace dawned on his troubled spirit. This was on the 27th of December, 1798.

It was not long before he was licensed to exhort, and in about a year he was sent by the presiding elder to Essex Circuit, Vt., to supply the place of the eccentric Lorenzo Dow, who, after traveling and laboring with incredible diligence, had departed under a supposed divine impression to preach in Ireland. He continued about three months on the circuit, exhorting, without a text, at all the appointments, holding a public meeting and leading a class daily. His word was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, and revivals broke out around the whole circuit. He soon after received license as a local preacher, and was sent by the presiding elder to Plattsburgh Circuit, N. Y., whence he was transferred in about six weeks to Cambridge Circuit, to supply the place of a disabled preacher. At the Conference of 1801 he was received on probation, and dispatched again to Plattsburgh. It was a long circuit, requiring about three hundred miles of travel monthly, with daily public labors. It reached from Ticonderoga on the south, to beyond the Canada line on the north, meandering extensively to the right and left, and the laborious itinerant was compelled to swim streams, traverse forests on new and rough roads, and sleep in log-cabins through which the rain and snow often beat upon him in his bed. Many of the settlements were recent, and in some of them the gospel had never been preached before. The settlers thronged to hear the word, and a flame of divine influence spread through the circuit, and hosts were gathered into the Church. In 1802 he was appointed to Fletcher Circuit, another large field of labor, extending from Onion River, Vt., on the south, fifteen or twenty miles beyond the Canada line, and including the settlements east of Lake Champlain and west of the Green Mountains. Here he had to travel

three hundred miles a month, preach once, and often twice daily, besides attending classes and prayer-meet-meetings. His colleague was Henry Ryan, "a brave Irishman," he says, a man who labored as if the judgment thunders were to follow each sermon.[15] The route of the circuit was in the form of the figure eight. The two preachers usually met at the point of intersection, when Ryan, hastily saluting his young fellow-laborer, would exclaim as he passed, "Drive on! drive on! brother, let us drive the devil out of the land!" a significant though rough expression of the tireless energy which characterized the itinerant ministry of that day. Here, likewise, were encountered all the privations and exposures of a recent country; bad roads, long drives in wintry storms, and through forests bound in ice, and sleepless nights spent in cabins through which the winds whistled and the rain dropped. More serious trials attended them and their successors in this region; while many of the settlers were hungry for the word of life, and welcomed them as the men who showed the way of salvation; others, perverted by their long privation of religious influences, pursued them with relentless persecutions. In some places Hedding was hooted and threatened in the streets; Dow was struck in the face; Abner Wood was horsewhipped; and Elijah Sabin severely wounded on the head by the butt-end of a whip. Still they prevailed; their persecutors were often marvelously awakened, multitudes received them joyfully, and gladly shared the reproach of the cross, and now peaceful and prosperous Churches are spread all over that region, the fruits of the toils and sufferings of Hedding and his co-laborers.

In 1803 he was sent to Bridgewater Circuit, N. H.,

[15] Letter of Hedding to the author.

which comprised thirteen towns, and required one hundred miles travel per week, two sermons usually a day, and three on the Sabbath. Here he had no colleague, but bore the burden alone. A remarkable revival attended his labors, intense interest spread throughout the circuit, hundreds were awakened, and it seemed that the whole population were about to turn unto God by repentance. Excited, himself, by the general interest, and unaided by a fellow-laborer, he exerted himself beyond his strength, and in the midst of his labors was smitten down by disease from which he never entirely recovered. He was unable to turn himself in bed, or lift food to his lips during six weeks, and more than four months passed before he could walk across his chamber; he resumed, however, his work, and the remainder of the year went around the circuit, preaching as he had strength, and gathering the fruits of his former labors. He formed during this year many new societies, which are still thriving. In 1804 he was on Hanover Circuit, N. H. The next year he was present at the Lynn Conference, and was ordained elder by Bishop Asbury, at a public service in a neighboring woods. From this Conference he was sent to Barre Circuit, Vt., with Dan Young. Here again he had a great field of trial and toil, preaching in twenty towns and riding about three hundred miles every four weeks, with daily services.

In 1806 he traveled the Vershire Circuit, Vt. During this year his prudence was called into exercise and tested by a remarkable occurrence. The disposition to emigrate to Ohio infected that whole section of the country. It became a species of mania, and every official member of the circuit departed about the same time, leaving it without a local preacher, trustee, stew-

ard, or leader. The Church, through the whole series of towns comprised in the circuit, was thus suddenly left without a single officer, and the vacant posts had to be as suddenly filled by new appointments. Hedding's wisdom was, however, found adequate to the singular exigency. He selected judicious and efficient men, and no inconvenience ensued. In 1807 he was appointed presiding elder of New Hampshire District, which included the entire extent of the state, except a small fragment about Portsmouth, which pertained to the Boston District. His labors this year were herculean, involving at least three thousand miles of travel and a daily public service, besides the usual and perplexing ecclesiastical business of the office; such, too, was the poverty of the infant Churches on the district, that at the end of the year his aggregate receipts for salary, besides traveling expenses, was $4 25. He continued two years on this district, and saw Methodism extended vastly in the state. In 1809 he was removed to New London District, which he traveled two years. It extended from Long Island Sound to New Hampshire, and from the Connecticut River to Narragansett Bay, R. I., and Needham, Mass. Several camp-meetings were held within it during those two years, and were remarkably successful. One particularly, at Hebron, Conn., was attended by a large concourse, about three thousand people being there constantly, many from great distances. The preaching was distinguished by extraordinary effects. It was estimated by Hedding himself, that under one sermon "five hundred persons fell to the earth as if shot, in five minutes." The excitement was resistless, and many sober-minded Christians, who had always opposed such scenes, were smitten down and lay insensible for hours. The fruits of those great occasions

are still scattered through New England. During the following four years he was stationed, respectively, at Boston, Nantucket, and Lynn; at the latter two years.

In the years 1815, 1816 he again labored in Boston, with Daniel Fillmore. This was a critical period in the history of Methodism in that city, the darkest day that ever lowered over it. After unparalleled struggles the society had succeeded, at large expense, in erecting the Bromfield-street Chapel. The effects of the recent war on business frustrated their fiscal plans, and left them with insupportable incumbrances. Eighteen thousand dollars, an enormous sum for the feeble society, must be raised within a limited time, or their property be forfeited. The embarrassment seemed inextricable, and as one board of trustees held both houses, it was the general anticipation that all the Methodists of Boston would be "turned out of doors" and left without a sanctuary. But at this critical juncture the generosity and business talent of Colonel Amos Binney, an energetic Methodist, together with the exertions of their pastors, provided deliverance for them. The former, who was conducting an extensive business, pledged himself that if the latter would sell on credit a number of pews, equivalent in value to the debt, he would accept the notes of the purchasers, allow them to be paid in work, according to their respective avocations, and pay down at once the necessary sum of eighteen thousand dollars. Hedding and Fillmore applied themselves to the task incessantly for several months, interceding with every one they met from whom they could expect assistance, and at last, by extraordinary exertions, procured the needed number of purchasers. The latter held a public meeting at the chapel, signed their notes, the money was munificently paid down by Colonel Binney, and the chapels of Meth

odism in Boston saved. And thus began the "pewed system" in American Methodism.

The next year Hedding was appointed to Portland District, and is so reported in the Minutes; but, owing to his enfeebled health, the appointment was changed to Portland city. The ensuing three years he was at Lynn (two years) and New London. In 1821 he took charge of Boston District, but his health was not sufficient for its great labors. The pulmonary and rheumatic affections he had contracted by exposures and excessive labors on Bridgewater Circuit, N. H., still affected him, and not a day or night passed from that time till his death, in which he was not reminded, by more or less pain, of those days of toil and suffering. He was compelled to retire from the district at the close of the year, and was returned to the city of Boston, where he labored two years, and in 1824 was elevated to the episcopacy. The remainder of his life will come under our attention elsewhere. The whole nation became his field. He stood firmly at his post in days of strife and peril, and aided in conducting the Church through exigencies which made the stoutest hearts tremble. From the time he commenced proclaiming the truth in the wilds of New Hampshire and Canada, he never wavered in the hope that God designed Methodism for enduring and universal triumphs.

Bishop Hedding, as remembered by most of the Church, was tall, stout, and dignified in person; his locks white with age, his face remarkable for its benign and intelligent expression, and his *tout ensemble* most venerable and impressive. His manners were marked by perfect simplicity and ease. In the pulpit he was always perspicuous, lucid, and instructive. His discourses were precisely arranged, delivered moder-

ately, in a style of extreme plainness, and frequently with passages of affecting pathos. He was distinguished for his accuracy in the doctrines and discipline of Methodism, the exact discrimination of his judgment, the extraordinary tenacity of his memory, the permanence of his friendships, and his invariable prudence.

The ecclesiastical year 1799–1800 included thirteen months, and had been attended with gratifying prosperity. Beauchamp and Snelling had spread the doctrines of Methodism through most of the towns of Cape Cod. Rhode Island, so tardy in the new movement, had received a strong impulse under the unremitted labors of Canfield, Hall, and Bishop. Instead of one circuit it now reported two; a new one had been formed, called Rhode Island. Considerable impression had been made on Connecticut, especially on the New London Circuit. The tireless Lawrence M'Coombs, combating opposition on all hands, had succeeded in fortifying the yet feeble societies throughout that large circuit, and in planting several new ones. Ostrander had reaped some increase on Tolland Circuit. While in some places in Massachusetts a declension had occurred, in others extensive revivals had prevailed: Nantucket made its first returns of members, amounting to sixty-five; Daniel Brumley had witnessed the victories of the truth on Pittsfield Circuit; hundreds felt its power, and more than one hundred and eighty were received into the Church. Chesterfield, hitherto the solitary circuit of New Hampshire, had also enjoyed the time of refreshing under the labors of John Nichols. The hardy laborers in the field of Maine—Merritt, Soule, Brodhead, Heath, Finnegan, and others—had passed through severe struggles, but with their usual success. Their leader, Joshua Taylor, had been drummed out of Castine with

tin kettles, and their cause had been attacked with not a little pugnacity from the pulpit and the press by their Calvinistic brethren. Some agitation was excited by a pamphlet entitled, "A brief Statement and Examination of the Sentiments of the Wesleyan Methodists, by Jonathan Ward, A. M." Taylor, however, published a timely reply in a pamphlet of seventy-six pages, which was written in a style perspicuous and lucid, in a temper bland and devout, and with a decisive logic. Ward, though manifestly foiled, returned to the attack under cover of a "Vindication of himself;" but a "Reply" from Taylor put an end to the controversy, and turned the advantage greatly to the persecuted Church.

In Vermont the fields were white unto the harvest, and the reapers thrust in the sickle and gathered a plenteous crop; hundreds, if not thousands, were converted, and nearly five hundred were gathered into the societies. The eccentric Lorenzo Dow had labored a short time with success on Essex Circuit, which extended through the northern part of the state into Canada. Seized by a sudden impression that it was his duty to cross the Atlantic and warn the Papists of Ireland, he erected a bush as a sail in a leaking canoe, and passing down the Missisque made his way to Montreal, whence he pursued his proposed voyage; but it was on this deserted circuit that Providence now raised up the youthful evangelist, Elijah Hedding, who took Dow's place, and was destined to bear the standard of the truth onward over the continent, and to be a burning and a shining light in the nation. Full of zeal and the energy of youth, he went round the circuit like a "flame of fire;" great numbers were converted, and more than a hundred and sixty were added to the classes. Vergennes Circuit was traveled this year by two indomit-

able men, Joseph Mitchell and Joseph Sawyer; it was a scene of great labors and equal trials, but they bore courageously the brunt of the battle. A reformation spread over the circuit, and about seventy were gathered into the classes. While Hedding, Mitchell, and Sawyer were thus spreading the cause west of the Green Mountains, Joseph Crawford and Elijah Chichester were extending it still more successfully east of them on the Vershire Circuit, where more than a hundred were added to the Church, besides hundreds who were converted, but entered other communions. Whitingham Circuit, which had been detached and extended from the northern part of Pittsfield Circuit at the beginning of the year, had prospered greatly under the labors of the good Peter Vannest; it made its first return of members, amounting to nearly one hundred. Only four years had passed since Nicholas Snethen traveled, the first itinerant, on the first circuit in Vermont; there were now nearly eleven hundred Methodists in the state. They had much more than trebled, nearly quadrupled, in two years.

There was at the end of the present ecclesiastical year the following number of Methodists in each New England state: Connecticut, 1,571; Rhode Island, 227; Massachusetts, 1,577; Maine, 1,197; New Hampshire, 171; Vermont, 1,096; total, 5,839.

We have reached the date of a new century, of the organization of the New England Conference by its separation from that of New York, and of the retirement of Lee, the chief hero of this part of our narrative, from the eastern field. We have seen him, solitary and friendless, begin his mission in New England by proclaiming "Ye must be born again," on the highway of Norwalk, June 17, 1789; eleven years have passed,

years of vast labors, sore trials, of poverty and perplexity, yet of triumph. A host of great evangelists have entered the field: Roberts, Smith, Bloodgood, Mills, Hunt, Taylor, Mudge, Pickering, Ostrander, Mitchell, M'Coombs, Brodhead, Merritt, Sabin, Bostwick, Beauchamp, Coate, Soule, Hedding, Kibby, Webb, and many others who were "mighty through God." They have confounded opposition, have preached the word "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," from Fairfield in Connecticut to the furthest eastern settlement of Maine, and from Provincetown in Massachusetts to St. Alban's in Vermont. They have laid securely the foundations of Methodism in the New England states, and at the close of eleven years we behold it spread into bands, comprising nearly 50 preachers and more than 5,800 members, an average of about 120 to each preacher, and these members and preachers distributed over four districts and thirty-one circuits.

Availing myself of the minute documentary materials of the New England Church, I have endeavored to use, as fully as possible, her historic traditions of the last century, for these early facts are the best illustrations of the genius of Methodism. Their record is not disproportionate to her subsequent and important relations to the rest of the denomination, and most of her biographic characters, hitherto sketched, became actors in its general history; but hereafter we shall necessarily have to pass more rapidly over her local annals.

In the remainder of the period Asbury, accompanied by Whatcoat, made repeated tours through the Eastern States, penetrating to the interior of Maine. Their visits were high festivals to the young Churches, and the Conference sessions, especially, were jubilees. Lee also, in the summer of 1800, re-entered the great

field for the last time, except a hasty visit some eight years later. It was his general leave-taking. He passed through its whole extent into Canada, and back by the Hudson, preaching farewell sermons amid the benedictions and tears of the people. His fellow-laborers and fellow-sufferers in the itinerancy parted with him, from place to place, with the deepest feeling, as from a hero who had led them to victory, and had secured for them the hard-fought field. During this circuitous and rapid journey his preaching averaged more than one sermon a day; he was continually occupied also in social prayer and counsels with the societies. He now leaves New England to pursue his evangelic course, with unabated heroism, in other sections. The foundations of Methodism had been laid by him in all the Eastern States; a large Conference had been organized; chapels had sprung up; a powerful ministry was moving to and fro, proclaiming the "great salvation" through extended but organized circuits, and thousands of converts were recorded on the roll of the Church. A great work had been achieved, and a great man had left his stamp upon the ecclesiastical history of all New England. His name, until recently, has been but little noted beyond the pale of his own denomination; but his instrumentality is developing broader and broader results as time elapses, and the future ecclesiastical historian of these Eastern States will place him among the foremost men of their religious annals.

The remaining four years were abundant in itinerant reinforcements; but most of them, with others heretofore omitted, will more conveniently come under notice in future parts of our narrative: Daniel Fidler, a laborer, from Virginia and the Redstone country, to

Nova Scotia, and at last a patriarch of the New Jersey Conference; Ebenezer F. Newhall, an apostle of those memorable times; Philip Munger and Asa Heath, veterans of Maine Conference; Asa Kent, a patriarch of Providence Conference, and indeed of all New England, still remembered by many for the sanctity of his life, his small stature, halting gait, wenned neck, and grave aspect, a man without a particle of humor, yet looked upon by his brethren, many of the best of whom were radiant with it, with kindliness, though not unmixed with apparent wonder and perplexity; Samuel Hillman, long a hard worker in Maine; Oliver Beale, a saint in the calendar of the Church; and many others equally worthy.

Thomas Branch was now a faithful and eminent itinerant, whose health broke down at last under the severities of the climate. He proposed to go to the southwest, and labor, while his dwindling strength should last, in the Western Conference, the only Conference then beyond the Alleghanies. Besides the various choice of climate which this immense field afforded, there was, to the devoted mind of Branch, an heroic if not romantic attraction in its adventurous life, and the triumph with which the itinerant ministry was prevailing in its wildernesses. He took leave of his Eastern brethren in much debility, and departed on horseback, with the usual itinerant accompaniment, the saddle-bags for his few books and rations, to penetrate through the forests to Marietta, on the Ohio. He never arrived, however. On passing from the western wilds of New York, down toward Ohio, along the southern shore of Lake Erie, he disappeared. News came at last that he had died somewhere among the log-cabins in the then remote forest of the northwestern angle of Pennsyl-

vania; but even this vague information reached not most of those to whom he was dear in New England till fifteen years later, when one of his old fellow-laborers at the East, who had, meanwhile, been elevated to the episcopacy, was pursuing his official visitations at the West, and accidentally discovering the place of his decease, sent home for publication information of his fate.[16] "He fell," wrote his friend, "in the wilderness, on his way to this country, in the month of June, 1812. His grave is in the woods, in the state of Pennsylvania, near the shore of Lake Erie, between the states of New York and Ohio. As I came through that part of the country I made inquiry respecting the sickness, death, and burial of our once beloved fellow-laborer in the cause of Christ. An intelligent friend, who said he had frequently visited and watched with him in his last sickness, and attended his funeral, gave me, in substance, the following circumstances. When he came into the neighborhood where he died it was a new settlement, where there was no Methodist society, and but few professors of religion of any name. He preached on a Sabbath, and at the close of the service stated to the strangers that he was on a journey, that he was ill, and unable to proceed, and desired that some one would entertain him till he should recover his strength sufficiently to pursue his journey. There was a long time of silence in the congregation. At last one man came forward and invited him home. At that house he lingered many weeks, and finally expired. The accommodations were poor for a sick man—a small log-house, containing a large family, consisting in part of small children; but doubtless it was the best the

[16] Bishop Hedding, to whom I am indebted for these facts, and who published them in the Zion's Herald of 1826.

place could afford. In his sickness (which was a pulmonary consumption) his sufferings were severe; but his patience and his religious consolations were great also. He frequently preached, prayed, and exhorted, sitting on his bed, when he was unable to go out, or even to stand. And so he continued laboring for the salvation of men while his strength would permit, and rejoicing in the Lord to the hour of his death. The above-named eye and ear witness informed me that he frequently said to him, 'It is an inscrutable providence that brought me here to die in this wilderness.' 'But,' said the witness, 'that providence was explained after his death; for, through the instrumentality of his labors, his patience, fortitude, and religious joys in his sickness, a glorious revival of religion shortly after took place, a goodly number of souls were converted to God, other preachers were invited to the place, and a large Methodist society was organized after his death.' That society continues to prosper, and they have now a good house for worship. After the soul of our brother had gone to heaven, his body was conveyed to the grave on a sled, drawn by oxen. The corpse was carried to a log building in the woods, called a meeting-house; but the proprietors denied admittance, and the funeral solemnities were performed without. As I came through the woodland in company with a preacher, having been informed where the place of his interment was, leaving our horse and carriage by the road, we walked some rods into the forest, and found the old log meeting-house, which had refused the stranger the rites of a funeral; but it was partly fallen, and forsaken. Then following a narrow path some distance further through the woods, we came to a small opening, which appeared to have been cleared of the wood for a

habitation for the dead. After walking and looking some time, a decent stone, near one corner of the yard, under the shade of the thick-set, tall forest, informed us where the body of our dear departed friend had been laid. A large oak tree had fallen, and lay across two of the adjoining tenants of that lonely place. We kneeled, prayed, and left the quiet spot, in joyful hope of meeting our brother again at the resurrection of the just."

Thomas Branch was an able preacher. His old fellow-laborers spoke of him, in their Conference obituary, with unwonted emphasis: "An Israelite indeed, in life, and in death. Who ever saw him without the gravity and sincerity of a Christian minister? always apparently collected and recollected, a child of affliction, and a son of resignation; how loved and honored of God and men! For several years a member of our connection, and secretary of the New England Conference. Rest, rest, weary dust! Rest, weary spirit, with the Father of spirits, and live forever!"

Martin Ruter, who was born in Sutton, Mass., in 1785, but sleeps in a missionary grave on the banks of the Brazos, in Texas, entered the eastern itinerant ranks in 1801, called into them by Brodhead. He was one of the noblest sons of New England, a good debater and writer, an able preacher, a leader of the educational interests of the denomination in the East and in the West, one of its best representative characters for many years, and at last a pioneer evangelist on its farthest frontier. We shall meet him often hereafter.

Laban Clark also appears on the Conference roll, for the first time, in 1801. Born in Haverhill, N. H., in 1778, and early removing to Vermont, he heard some of the first evangelists who penetrated the latter state, and

became a Methodist in 1799. In 1800 he was preaching about his neighborhood with John Langdon, a local preacher, and one of the principal founders of the Church in Vermont. Brodhead who, the same year, had pressed Ruter into the itinerant service, now summoned out Clark, and thus presented to the Church two of its most important public men. Clark still lives, after more than sixty years of invaluable services, which will bring him often before us; his life, like that of Ruter, has been so extensively identified with the general history of the Church as not to admit of its individualization here. A man of vigorous physical health, of strong and genial mind, of great practical capacity, of never-wavering enthusiasm for his Church and all its important enterprises, a living history of it for more than threescore years, and an able preacher, notwithstanding a marked vocal defect, he has been prominent among its most exponent characters.

These remaining four years were eventful to the Church all over the Eastern States. They began with the first session of the New England Conference, as a distinct organized body, at Lynn, Mass., July 8, 1800. Revivals prevailed generally, greatly increasing the congregations and societies. The itinerancy was not only largely recruited, but in a few places tested by severe persecutions. Elijah R. Sabin was mobbed on Needham Circuit, where he preached in the open air. Some of his brethren, at the Conference, would moderate his zeal; but Asbury approved him, affirming that "this is the way Methodist preachers began, and we need warm hearts to carry the work forward." The Boston Methodists suffered much from the rabble, who besieged their humble temple, begun on Hanover Avenue (then known as Methodist Alley) in 1795, but not completed

till 1800, after which time, say its old records, "the troubled and persecuted society found, in some degree, rest to their souls;" it was yet only, however, in "some degree." They had still many a sore conflict before cultivated Boston properly recognized them. Hibbard fought his way through intolerable trials on Granville Circuit. He speaks of twenty-six sermons a month as "moderate labor," and only complains when he had twelve appointments a week, and "no rest-week in which to go home and visit his family." "Some days," he says, "when riding to my appointments, I was almost all the way in tears, often inquiring of the Lord, in ejaculatory prayers, 'What can I do to save these souls from delusion?' Some threw stones at me, and some set their dogs on me as I rode along; but the Lord defended me. I never had a stone to hit me, nor a dog to bite me. Some threatened to whip me; but I escaped all. I heard of many threats, but none laid hands on me."

In Lancaster, Vt., Langdon, Clark, and Crawford were assailed by the mob. The ruffians cowered before the courage of Langdon, who was a gigantic and brave man; but they carried off Crawford, and ducked him in the river, with huzzas. In this same state, now so tolerant and so Methodistic, Washburn had similar trials, though better escapes. "I have had," he says, "stones and snowballs cast at me in volleys. I have had great dogs sent after me, to frighten my horse, as I was peacefully passing through small villages; but I was never harmed by any of them. I have been saluted with the sound of 'glory, hosanna, amen, halleluiah!' mixed with oaths and profanity. If I turned my horse to ride toward them, they would show their want of confidence, both in their master, and in themselves, by scattering

and fleeing like base cowards." Even in Middletown, Conn., (now the seat of their university,) the Methodists suffered such persecutions. Stocking, of Glastenbury, long a venerated local preacher, writes: "I have been stoned, and my life put in jeopardy, by the lawless mob. Open persecution continued there until put down by the strong arm of the law. Thanks to God, Middletown is renovated!" Ostrander, reporting a great revival there in 1802, says: "The spirit of persecution is much awake. The houses where we assemble are frequently stoned, and the windows broken to pieces; but all this does not move the young converts, who are as bold as lions."[17]

Kibby was threatened with violence in Marblehead, and advised to leave the town, but stood his ground successfully. The Methodists of those days were in many places persecuted even to fines, the seizure of their goods, and, sometimes, imprisonment, by the dominant Church. They were denounced from the pulpits, maltreated in the courts, interrupted in the course of their sermons with charges of heresy, and assailed in the streets by the rabble. Washburn, as we have seen, was hooted through the villages; Hedding cursed with outcries on the highway; Dow's nose was publicly wrung; Sabin was knocked down, and struck on the head, to the peril of his life, with the butt of a gun; Wood was horsewhipped; Christie, summoned out of bed to answer to a charge of violating the laws, by marrying a couple of his people; Willard, wounded in the eye by a blow, the effect of which was seen through his life; Mudge, denied the rights of a clergyman, and arraigned before the magistrate for assuming them;

[17] Memorials of Methodism in the Eastern States. Second series, p 196. New York, 1854.

Kibby, stoned while preaching, and Taylor drummed out of town. It requires more determination to endure such grievances than to meet graver trials; but the early Methodist itinerants were proof against both.

With all its poverty and persecutions the Church prevailed surprisingly during this period. There were, at its close, more than ten thousand Methodists in New England.[18] It had about fifty circuits, and more than eighty itinerants. It had gained since 1796 more than seven thousand five hundred members, twenty-nine circuits, and fifty-seven preachers.

[18] Including those who were on New York circuits which reached into the Eastern States.

CHAPTER XIX.

METHODISM IN THE WEST, 1796–1804.

Western Methodism — The Redstone Country — Valentine Cook — His great Public Debate — Daniel Hitt — James Quinn — His long Services and Character — Lasley Matthews and Chieuvrant, Converted Papists and Heroic Evangelists — Thornton Flemming — Asa Shinn — Methodism Penetrates to the Erie Country — The Roberts Family — Local Preachers — Robert R. Roberts — His Early Life and Character — He becomes a Bishop — His thoroughly Western Character — His Episcopal Residence a Log-cabin — Illustrations of his Character — Curious Rencounter with a Young Preacher: Note — Methodism in the Erie Conference—Reaches Ohio —Progress in Western Virginia — Quinn's Labors there — Ministerial Recruits — General Morgan — The Holston Country — M'Kendree and Bruce — The "Western Conference" — Benjamin Lakin's Labors and Character — Valentine Cook in the Holston Country — His subsequent Life — His Death and Character — Henry Smith — James M'Cull — John Sale — Judge M'Lean's Estimate of him.

The apparent incoherency of our record of Western Methodism must still continue, for thus only can it be true to the real condition of the Church in these early times. An individual itinerant, traveling a circuit of five hundred or more miles; a solitary layman or local preacher, like M'Cormick in the Northwestern territory, ministering to his emigrant neighbors; "small classes," the germs of societies, rising like far-scattered lights in the wilderness, such were yet, in much of the great West, the only facts of the denomination; but they are soon to assume continuity and consistence, and to present one of the most consolidated and effective systems of religious provisions in the new, if not indeed in the whole world, with stations, circuits, districts, Confer-

ences, Sunday-schools, academies, colleges, presses, and hundreds of thousands of communicants, and millions of congregational adherents. It is now, however, in the minute study of its inceptive history that we are to learn its real genius and its best lessons for the future.

We have seen its progress, down to 1796, in its first field, the ultra-Alleghany region of Pennsylvania, called the Redstone country. The present period opens there with five circuits and nine preachers, comprehended in one district. Valentine Cook commands the little band as presiding elder. We find in it James Paynter, who had pioneered among the Tioga Mountains, and Nathaniel B. Mills, whom we have met in the Wyoming Valley, its first itinerant preacher, and also an associate of Lee in the earliest struggles of the Church in New England. Such was the itinerancy of these days. Cook was the champion of the field. He flew over his district like a herald—a king's messenger—proclaiming the gospel, night and day, directing his preachers, and rousing the scattered settlements. The West made little use of the press in his day; public debate, in the shade of the woods, was the usual resort of the people and their leaders for the solution of both political and theological questions. Though Methodist preachers disliked this doubtful mode of discussing divine truth, they sometimes had to conform to the custom. In the Redstone country Cook was challenged to such a debate by a clergyman of the Scotch Seceders, a denomination somewhat prevalent there. The irascible Scot had severely attacked Wesley and Methodism as especially heretical respecting the "doctrines of grace." Bishop Roberts, who was then a young Methodist on Cook's district, and who "really thought that a greater or

better man had never existed,"[1] witnessed the controversy, and we owe to him an account of the scene. The people thronged from many miles, eager to witness the combat; crowding the taverns the preceding night, and disputing, with spirit, the subject and the claims of the contestants. On the appointed morning they gathered in hosts around a lofty pulpit which had been erected in the midst of a forest, and was surrounded with a vast number of seats for the immense concourse. These arrangements appeared to have been exclusively prepared by the votaries of the old Scotch minister. In truth, Roberts saw no one who was at all inclined to favor Cook, or his cause. Upon the whole, it was perfectly clear, from all that he could see and hear, that a great victory, in the estimation of the dominant party, was that day to be achieved on the side of Calvinism. It was at last announced that the Methodist preacher had arrived. Roberts found him, a little beyond the limits of the congregation, quietly seated on the trunk of a fallen tree. His presence, however, appeared to put a quietus for the time being on the rampant spirit of the opposition, especially as their champion had not yet made his appearance. At length the aged Scotchman drove up, until he had well nigh reached the center of the crowd. He was a well-set, broad-shouldered, venerable-looking man of about sixty. His features were strongly marked, and indicated a due proportion of "iron" as well as intellect. When interrogated by one of his friends as to the cause of his delay, he promptly replied with a heavy Scotch brogue, "I'm here in ample time to gi'e the youngster a dose from which he'll not soon recover." The parties had never

[1] See the bishop's account of the debate, in Dr. Stevenson's "Biographical Sketch" of Cook, p. 84.

seen each other, and, of course, had no personal acquaintance. When introduced, as they soon were, though in a very awkward manner, Cook was treated with marked incivility. With an air of authority the Scotchman ascended the pulpit, and, without prayer or explanation, commenced a furious attack on Wesley and Methodism in general. He soon became greatly excited, "raved, stamped, and literally foamed at the mouth." By the time he entered on the support of Calvinism, properly so called, his voice was well-nigh gone. In about two hours he brought his remarks to a close, and sat down greatly exhausted. Cook then rose in the pulpit, and after a fervent appeal to Almighty God, for wisdom and help to defend the truth, he commenced under much embarrassment. His hand trembled, his tongue faltered, and at times it was with difficulty he could articulate with sufficient clearness to be heard on the outskirts of the assembly. He first took up, and refuted with great power, the allegations that had been made against Wesley and Methodism. By this time his embarrassment had passed off, his voice became clear and distinct, and, withal, there was a strange sweetness in his delivery, that seemed to put a spell on the whole assembly. He then entered his solemn protest to the exceptionable features of the Calvinistic theology. He opposed to the opinions of reputedly great and learned men, on which his opponent had mainly relied, the plain and positive teachings of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and his apostles; and in conclusion presented an outline of the scheme of human salvation, as taught by Wesley and his followers in Europe and America; not in its theory only, but in its experimental and practical bearings. At an early period in his discourse his opponent

rose to his feet, and exclaimed, with all the voice he had left, "Wolf! wolf! Wolf in sheep's clothing!" Cook, however, had become so perfectly self-possessed, and so entirely absorbed in his subject, that this rudeness had no effect upon him. As he advanced he appeared to acquire additional strength, physical, mental, and spiritual. The fixed attention of the vast multitude seemed to inspire him with new powers of argument and eloquence. His voice, usually soft and soothing, rolled on, in thunder-tones, over the concourse, and echoed far away in the depths of the forest; while his countenance lighted up, kindled, and glowed, as if he were newly commissioned from on high to proclaim the salvation of God. The Scotchman could endure it no longer. He again sprang to his feet, and shouted at the top of his shattered voice, "Follow me, follow me, and leave the babbler to himself." Only some two or three obeyed him. Cook was too much absorbed to pay the slightest attention to the ravings or flight of his opponent. He pressed directly forward with his argument, dealing out at every step the most startling demonstrations against error in faith and practice. Long before the mighty effort was brought to a close the whole assembly were on their feet, all eagerly listening, and unconsciously pressing toward the speaker. Every eye was fixed, every ear was opened, and every heart was tremblingly alive to the importance of the theme. When he took his seat all faces were upturned, and for the most part bathed in tears. The great multitude stood for some time like statues, no one appearing disposed to move, utter a word, or leave the place. All seemed to be overwhelmed, astonished, and captivated. At last the spell-bound multitude retired, "silent as a funeral procession." "It is well known,"

adds Cook's biographer, "that this controversy was the means of opening to her ministry a 'great and effectual door' of usefulness. From that day forward the Methodist Church, in all that mountain range of country, has been rapidly advancing in numbers and influence."

The next year Daniel Hitt had charge of the vast district, a Virginian, who began to travel in 1790, and became distinguished, throughout the Connection, as an effective laborer, the traveling companion of Asbury and M'Kendree, and for eight years the Book Agent of the Church in New York city; and who died, after a ministry of thirty-five years, in Washington County, Md., in 1825, in the hope of the gospel. For eighteen years he had charge of districts which comprised more territory each than most present individual Conferences. Like Asbury, M'Kendree, Lee, and many of the early leaders of Methodism, he remained unmarried, through life, that he might give himself entirely to his work. He was exceedingly particular and neat in his dress, the customary Quakerlike costume of his brethren, the single-breasted coat, broad-brimmed hat, and long hair. He was of grave if not stern manners, a good counselor, a plain but, at times, very powerful preacher, and inflexibly decided in his opinions, not to say prejudices.

James Quinn, to whom we have been already indebted for many historical reminiscences of this region, appears for the first time on the list of its appointments in 1799. He was born in it (in Washington County) in 1775, and lived to be its most venerable representative of his Church. His family early moved to Fayette County, where they heard the first Methodist itinerants who crossed the Alleghanies, and became

their disciples. It was not till the eleventh year of his age that young Quinn heard a sermon; he had then the great privilege of hearing the saintly Peter Moriarty.[2] In his thirteenth year he witnessed the second Conference beyond the Alleghanies, at Uniontown, Pa.[3] He was converted, and joined the Methodists in 1792, under the ministry of Daniel Fidler and James Coleman, whom we have already met in far off fields of labor. He was immediately pressed into active service in the Church, and in 1799 was received on probation by the Baltimore Conference, and appointed to Greenfield Circuit, which extended into three counties. Before the year ended he was tossed about on at least three similar circuits. Thus began his long and faithful career, in which we shall often meet him again, for his life, during more than half a century, was almost a history of Western Methodism. More than half a century after he began his ministry he stood in a Conference in Ohio, and could say, "And now here I am, 'a reed shaken with the wind,' a feeble old man, trembling as I lean upon the top of my staff; but where am I? In the midst of a Conference of ministers, near one hundred and fifty in number, most of whom have been twice born since the time of which I speak. Among them are the sons, the grandsons, and great-grandsons of those who kindly received me, and to whom I ministered in their humble dwellings. No doubt I have taken some of these ministers in my arms, and dedicated them to God in holy baptism; and on some of them I have laid my hand in consecrating them to the sacred

[2] Sketch of the Life, etc., of James Quinn, by John F. Wright, p. 18. Cincinnati, 1851.

[3] Not the first, as the biographer of Quinn supposes. See vol. ii, p. 353.

office and work of the ministry. O! why should my heart yield to fear? The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is yet our help."

As a preacher he was very instructive, and not unfrequently exceedingly powerful; when, himself "overwhelmed with his subject, manifestly endued with power from on high, and a sacred unction and divine influence accompanying every sentence, the enchained multitude stood in solemn awe, till finally the awful silence was broken by a sudden outburst of the groans and cries of sinners, and joyful acclamations of Christians from all parts of the densely crowded congregation."

There was a deep vein of poetry in his nature. He loved the great bards, and his sermons abounded in fine citations from them. His manners showed a singular blending of dignity and amenity, the truest style of the real gentlemen; solemnity and pathos characterized him in his religious exercises; his form was manly, nearly six feet in height, and well proportioned; his forehead prominent and broad; his eyes dark, deeply-set, and shaded by heavy brows.

Lasley Matthews was also a pioneer itinerant of these times, an Irishman, and a papist, who had served in the Revolutionary war. While in camp, he was associated with Chieuvrant, who himself had been a papist, but who now read to his comrade a small Bible which he carried in his pocket, and thus led him to a religious life. Both became zealous preachers and founders of the Church in the West. We have met Chieuvrant repeatedly, and seen him last preaching in moccasins, and pursuing with his rifle the murderous Indians on the Monongahela, a brave man as well as a devoted evangelist. Matthews began to travel in 1786, and preached

during twenty-seven years, mostly in the hardest parts of the work. After doing chivalric service he was crowned with a fitting victory. He died in 1813, on his way to meet his brethren in Conference. "When," wrote one of his friends, "he could no longer articulate, by putting my ear to his lips, I could hear him attempting to say, 'Glory! Praise him! My Jesus come!'"[4]

Thornton Fleming had charge of the district in 1801. Born in Virginia in 1764, he joined the Methodists in about his twentieth year, and the itinerancy in his twenty-fourth year, and continued to labor with his might through a ministry of more than fifty-seven years; part of the time in Virginia, on some of its most mountainous circuits; part as presiding elder among the Tioga and Wyoming Mountains and New York interior lakes, where we have already met him; but most of the time in the ultra-Alleghany region of Pennsylvania, where he did much to found the Pittsburgh and Erie Conferences, and was one of the first members of the former. For fifteen years he filled the laborious office of presiding elder. He was to suffer much, and perish at last, by a cancer in his left eye, but to die in the assured hope of the gospel, the oldest member of the Pittsburgh Conference, a man "of rare endowments" and distinguished usefulness.[5]

Asa Shinn now also appears in the Redstone Circuit, a man of more than ordinary historic importance in the Church, who will claim our attention in some future and momentous events. We have already seen him struggling, in the western woods, for intellectual and moral improvement, under the aid of Quinn, and beginning to preach "before he had ever seen a meeting-

[4] Minutes of 1813. [5] Minutes of 1847.

house or a pulpit."[6] He began to itinerate in 1800, on Pittsburgh Circuit, though he was not received in the Conference till the next year.[7] He was a pioneer of Methodism in many regions, in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Kentucky, suffering much from miasmatic fevers, and mobs. In his later ministry he occupied prominent appointments in the Eastern states. He wielded a strong and sharp pen, and became a champion of the secession which led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church. Four times he suffered attacks of mental derangement, and died in an insane asylum in 1853. He published several works, of no ordinary ability: in 1813, "An Essay on the Plan of Salvation;" in 1820, a treatise on "The Benevolence and Rectitude of the Supreme Being;" in 1824 he commenced his numerous and spirited articles on Methodist "reform" in the "Mutual Rights," a periodical of Baltimore. He was, at least in his latter years, a robust, corpulent man, with an expressive eye, an ample forehead, large mouth, pale complexion, black hair, and richly mellow voice; his intellect was of the highest order found among the strong but uneducated men of the Methodist ministry of his times. As a preacher he was pre-eminently able and powerful; logical, clear, and full of suasive force. "Among all the sons of men, I never found one superior to him in ministerial qualifications," writes one who knew him during forty years.[8] He had no imagination, no poetical ornamentation; his power arose solely from concentrated thought and moral feeling. Throughout the remainder of the present period he did brave service for the Church on Redstone, Chenango, Kockhocking, and Guyandotte Circuits.

With such men were associated, through more or less

[6] Vol. ii, p. 343. [7] Sprague, p. 363. [8] Rev. George Brown, D. D.

of this period, Robert Manly, Jesse Stoneman, James Hunter, Joseph Shane, Joseph Chieuvrant, Thomas Daughaday, Thomas Budd, Shadrach Bostwick, and others, some of whom did notable service, to be hereafter recorded. By 1804 they had extended the Redstone District (now called after the Monongahela) far and wide; it reached into the Erie country, the wilds of Ohio and Western Virginia, and embraced nine vast circuits, over which fourteen itinerants were heralding the gospel and organizing Churches.

In penetrating into the more northern region, now the vigorous Erie Conference, Methodism had its usual frontier struggles. In 1798 a family by the name of Roberts settled in Chenango; about the same time two Irish local preachers, Jacob Gurwell and Thomas M'Clelland, ("very respectable preachers,"[9]) began to labor among the settlers, proclaiming the word in their cabins and in the open air under trees. They formed a class this year, and appointed a youth, Robert R. Roberts, its leader; he thus became the first leader of the first class in the Erie Conference, and was destined to become one of the most effective evangelists and bishops of the Church which had found him in these remote woods.

He was born in Frederick County, Md., in 1778.[10] In 1785 the family emigrated over the mountains to the Ligonier Valley, Westmoreland County, Pa. There they lived, in the woods, for some years, without other religious means than their domestic Bible. When young Roberts was about ten years old, Jacob Lurton, Lasley Matthews, and James O. Cull reached this settlement,

[9] History of Methodism in the Erie Annual Conference, etc. By Samuel Gregg, vol. i, p. 28. New York, 1865.

[10] Life of Bishop Roberts. By Rev. Dr. Charles Elliott, p. 13. New York, 1853.

and preached to them the doctrines of Methodism Cull was a "son of thunder," and under one of his sermons both Roberts and his mother were deeply affected. Subsequently he heard the voice of his sister in secret prayer, and his heart was more deeply stirred. It was not long before the entire family joined the Church. Young Roberts was now a stalwart youth, wearing, says his biographer, the common backwoods costume: the broad-rimmed, low-crowned, white-wool hat, the hunting shirt of tow linen, buckskin breeches, and moccasin shoes. He read assiduously the books of Wesley and Fletcher. His home was the Methodist place of worship, the class-meetings were held, and the itinerants entertained there, and from them he obtained advantages which he prized through life.

In 1795 he went to Chenango, now Mercer County, which he thoroughly traversed and examined, carrying his food on his back in a knapsack, and sleeping under the trees; and in 1797, accompanied by others, he settled there. He suffered much in this new location, and lived mostly by hunting; but before the close of the next year he had around him the whole of his family, as also other settlers, and soon Methodism was successfully planted among them by Gurwell and M'Clelland, its little class being under his own leadership. About 1800 Fleming gave him license to exhort; but his almost morbid diffidence kept him from using it; the next year Quinn called upon him often "to speak to the people," which he did with trembling, but with success. In 1802 he was preaching, and the same year was received on probation by the Baltimore Conference, and sent to Carlisle Circuit, under the presiding eldership of Wilson Lee. Here his work was excessive, and before the year closed he had suffered

attacks of small-pox and measles, and lost two horses. His subsequent labors were mostly in westward circuits in Virginia and Pennsylvania, including the Erie and Pittsburgh regions; but his commanding talents led to his removal to the East, where he filled important appointments in the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences. While presiding elder of Schuylkill District, including Philadelphia, a session of the Philadelphia Conference occurred at which no bishop was present. A *pro tempore* president must be elected, in such a case, by ballot from the presiding elders. Roberts, though youngest of them all, was chosen. He presided with such manifest ability and dignity that the Conference and other preachers, visitors, on their way to the General Conference, where the episcopate was to be reinforced, decided to propose him for that high function. He was elected, and thus passed, in sixteen years, from the humble position of a young backwoods itinerant to the highest office of the ministry. "He possessed," says one of the most competent judges, "by nature the elements of an orator: an imposing person, a clear and logical mind, a ready utterance, a full-toned, melodious voice; and when to all these were added an ardent love of souls, and an unction from above, he of course became a powerful preacher. He did not aim, however, at display, but at usefulness, and therefore commanded the more respect and confidence as an able minister of the New Testament."[11]

When he first presented himself in the Baltimore Conference he had traveled thither, from the western wilds, with bread and provender in his saddle-bags and with one dollar in his pocket; but his superior character immediately impressed Asbury and the

[11] Bishop Morris.

assembled preachers. His episcopal appointment was providential. The great field of Methodism was in the West. He was a child of the wilderness; he had been educated in its hardy habits; his rugged frame and characteristic qualities all designated him as a great evangelist for the great West. There he had built his log-cabin, and dwelt comparatively out of sight of civilized man, tilling the earth in summer, and hunting the bear, the deer, and the raccoon in winter. He became one of the most expert huntsmen in his day, and, in after life, often surprised veteran marksmen, on the far frontier, by the deadly certainty of his fire. The entire winter had he spent at his solitary cabin, twenty miles away from any human habitation, and cheered only by the faithful company of his favorite sister, who prepared his repasts of wild meat.

The refinements of the Atlantic cities could not repress the ruling passion of his youth—it followed him through life and was strong even in death; he lived a circuit preacher as he had a "settler," and a bishop as he had a circuit preacher, in a log-cabin; and died in a log-cabin. No sooner had he been elected a bishop than he fixed his episcopal residence in the old cabin at Chenango; and his next removal was to Indiana, then the far West, where his episcopal palace was a log-cabin built by his own hands, and his furniture rude fabrications from the forest wood, made with such tools as he had carried in his emigrant wagon. The first meal of the bishop and his family in his new abode was of roasted potatoes only, and it was begun and ended with hearty thanksgiving. Here he lived in the true simplicity of frontier life, toiling, at his occasional leisure, in the fields. The allowance for his family expenses, besides two hundred per annum for quarterage, was, during

most of his episcopal career, from two hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars per annum; at least this was the case till 1836.

Simple and severe as this western life was, it was legitimate to the character and position of Roberts; it comported with the new field, the great diocese of the Mississippi Valley, into which he was thrust. There was in it a compatibility with the genius of the country, with the circumstances of time and place. Such was the life for such a field; and Roberts was the man for both such a field and such a life.

Naturally cheerful and amiable, his piety was never gloomy, though seldom ecstatic. He was one of the most agreeable of companions; he could calmly endure afflictions, and compassionately forgive offenses; ne was fitted for domestic life and permanent friendships. As is natural with such a disposition, he was generous and liberal. Those who knew well his private affairs have estimated that his pecuniary contributions, during his ministerial life, amounted to more than all his receipts from the Church for domestic expenses. He was especially liberal to literary institutions. He prized learning from a sense of his own need of it, having had but about three months' instruction after his seventh year. On an episcopal visitation to New Orleans he found the brethren attempting, with few resources, to erect a church; he sold his horse, and, giving them all it brought, a hundred dollars, made his way with many difficulties to Nashville, where his friends provided him with another and funds with which to finish his journey. While at home, in the periods between his episcopal tours, he worked hard in the fields that he might have the means of indulging this propensity of his generous mind. He

was as whole-hearted in his ministerial labors. According to his routes, the last year he lived, he must have traveled between five and six thousand miles, visiting some half dozen states, and nearly an equal number of Indian nations.

As a preacher he was always interesting, and frequently eloquent, though his passions never had undue play in the pulpit. A thoroughly systematic arrangement of his subject, readiness of thought, fluent and generally correct diction, and a facile yet dignified manner, were his characteristics in the desk. His large person—corpulent, and nearly six feet in height, his strongly-marked features, elevated forehead, and manners of extreme simplicity and cordiality, gave to his presence the air of a superior man—one to be remembered, revered, and loved.

It is certainly no small tribute to his character to say, that its greatest apparent defect was the excess of a very amiable quality—he was constitutionally diffident. In his earlier life this disposition rendered him painfully modest, and throughout his career it deterred him from many bold and energetic measures which his position and abilities justified, and which might have been of wide influence on the Church. He often referred facetiously to instances of his early embarrassment. For a long time after his appointment as class-leader among his rustic neighbors, he could not assume courage enough to address them individually, and he had actually to be superseded by another leader till he conquered this timidity. In his first attempt at public exhortation, he suddenly sat down appalled at the intent look of a good man whose favorable interest he took for disapprobation. At another time, when he was expected to exhort, he was so alarmed as to retire in agony and

conceal himself in a barn. In the third attempt he proceeded some time with good effect, but, fearing he had made a blunder, stopped short in confusion.

In after years this extreme diffidence became a subdued modesty, not interfering with his ordinary duties, but deterring him from most novel or experimental plans, however hopeful, and leading often to ludicrous mistakes among persons who did not know him. When stopping in his travels among strangers, he usually assumed no other pretensions than those of a private Christian; and frequently it was not till the family-worship revealed his spirit and talents that his ministerial character was supposed. Under such circumstances he has sometimes attended class-meeting with his host, and received warm and pointed exhortations from zealous leaders.[12]

[12] On returning to the West, after a General Conference, he once applied at the house of a Methodist family to which he had been recommended for entertainment. He was as usual humble in dress, and dusty and weary. The family, taking him to be a rustic traveler, permitted him to put up and feed his horse, and take his seat in the sitting-room. Supper was over, and no one took the trouble to inquire if he had taken any on the way. The preacher of the circuit was stopping at the same house; he was young, frivolous, and foppish, an occasional though very rare example among Methodist preachers, and spent the evening in gay conversation with the daughters of the family, alluding occasionally and contemptuously to the "old man," who sat silently in the corner. The good bishop, after sitting a long time, with no other attention than these allusions, respectfully requested to be shown to bed. The chamber was over the sitting-room, and, while on his knees praying with paternal feeling for the faithless young preacher, he still heard the gay jest and rude laugh. At last the family retired without domestic worship. The young preacher slept in the same room with the bishop. "Well, old man," said he as he got into bed, "are you asleep yet?" "I am not, sir," replied the bishop. "Where have you come from?" "From east of the mountains." "From east of the mountains, aye—what place?" "Baltimore, sir." "Baltimore, aye—the seat of our General Conference—did you hear anything about it? We expect Bishop Roberts to stop here on his way home." "Yes, sir," replied the bishop,

Methodism, beginning within the Erie Conference by the formation of Roberts's little class in Chenango, soon spread out to other settlements. Emigration poured into the country, bringing many Methodist families from the East. Settlements sprung up rapidly on each side of the Pennsylvania and Ohio line. By 1801 the Pittsburgh District, as this whole region was now called, took in all the present Erie, Pittsburgh, and Western Virginia Conferences. It reported two northern circuits within the present Erie Conference, the Erie and Chenango, traveled by Quinn and Shane. Quinn's whole field had not yet a single society or class. He went forth to organize it. Asbury, in appointing him to it at the Conference, called him forward and, pressing him to his bosom, gave him a Discipline, and said, "Go,

humbly, "it ended before I left." "Did you ever see Bishop Roberts?" "Yes, sir, often; we left Baltimore together." "*You* left Baltimore together?" "Yes, sir." "What's your name, my old friend?" "Roberts, sir." "Roberts! Roberts! Excuse me, sir, are you related to the bishop?" "They usually call me Bishop Roberts, sir." "Bishop Roberts! Bishop Roberts! are you Bishop Roberts, sir?" said the young man, leaping out of bed, and trembling with agitation. Embarrassed and confounded he implored the good man's pardon, insisted on calling up the family, and seemed willing to do anything to redeem himself. The bishop gave him an affectionate admonition, which he promised with tears never to forget. The venerable and compassionate man knew the frivolity of youth; giving him much parental advice, and praying with him, he would not allow the family to be called, though he had eaten nothing since breakfast. The next morning, after praying again with the young man, he left before the family had risen, that he might save them a mortifying explanation. This fact was a salutary lesson to the young itinerant; at the next Conference he called upon the bishop, a renewed man; he wept again as he acknowledged his error, and became a useful and eminent minister. Bishop Roberts often alluded to the incident, but, through a commendable kindness, would never tell the name of the young preacher. The story has been extensively circulated, with some exaggeration, and with Bishop George substituted for Bishop Roberts. Bishop Roberts was its real subject. The fact has been doubted, but his biographer says, "that it was a real occurrence, is certain."

my son, and make full proof of thy ministry." His whole journey was performed on horseback, along steep and rugged mountain paths. He entered upon his work with true apostolic zeal, and soon was enabled to see "streams breaking forth in the wilderness." His circuit, when formed, contained twenty appointments, requiring him to travel four hundred miles every four weeks. The first class he organized was near a place called Lexington, in Springfield township, Erie County, Pa. A settler says, "I heard him preach at the house of Stephen Maxwell, a cabin twelve by seventeen feet, no floor in it, a black ash bark roof, the room overhung with pumpkins prepared to dry." Such were many of his preaching places. Quinn says: "I suffered a little in the flesh this year. Breadstuff was very scarce, and what flesh we ate was chiefly taken from the woods with the rifle; but about midsummer we got plenty of potatoes. Once, however, having been several days without bread or meat, I indulged, when very hungry, in eating too freely of half-ripe blackberries, which caused an attack of bilious colic, that held me two days. Upon the whole, I look back with as much pleasure upon the labors and sufferings of that year as any of the many years I have been employed in the vineyard of the Lord."

Some half dozen classes were formed on his circuit before the ecclesiastic year closed, and some sixty-five members reported; while the Chenango Circuit returned about sixty members: a hundred and twenty-five Methodists in all, the nucleus of a Conference which now (1866) reports nearly thirty thousand, and has covered the country with religious provisions.

The next year Asa Shinn labored with success through these regions, and Henry Shewel, a local preacher from

New Jersey, who had lived some time in Redstone, penetrated (the last forty miles through an unbroken wilderness, without a settler,) to Deerfield, Portage County, Ohio, and extended the Church thither, so that in 1803 we find Deerfield reported as the title of a new circuit. By 1804 there were three circuits, with three preachers, besides Fleming, the presiding elder, in these northern regions, and the membership had increased to more than five hundred. The whole district reported nine circuits, fourteen preachers, and more than three thousand three hundred (3,327) members.

Meanwhile, farther southward, within Virginia, the denomination was pressing forward energetically. Reese Wolf, a local preacher, and Beauchamp, whom we lately left in New England, had arrived on the banks of the little Kanawha, and founded it there. Quinn was sent in 1802 to a large field, formed by the union of Berkeley and Winchester Circuits. He has left a sketch of his work, written in his old age, but full of the zest of his youthful itinerancy. "At Whitehouse, on Bull skin, Bartholomew Smith's, father of old Henry Smith, of Baltimore Conference; Scurff's, near Battletown; Green's, near Paris, or the Blue Ridge; Northern's, in Sniger's Gap; Weekly's; Leehewtown, on Shenandoah; North's; we had classes at all save one; and some revival influence, and refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in the course of the year. This last section was a very rough portion of the circuit, as we had to cross the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah River each twice. But we minded not the toil, for in those days Methodist preachers were wont to find their way into every nook and corner where there were human beings, provided they could find an open door, and procure an audience, be the fare rough or smooth. But

we have not got round yet. We have still another important section, and this will bring us to Stevensburgh, White Post, Middletown, the Cove among the mountains, on Cedar Creek, Spackelford's Meeting-house, and Sadler's. At all these stands we had societies. That at Spackelford's, however, was very feeble. I think only four in number. At Stevensburgh we were favored with a most blessed revival; scores of precious souls were brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Out of this revival several preachers came forth—a White, Talbot, Pool, Brison, and others. I have met some of the subjects and witnesses of that revival in the West, where we have talked and thought of the subject till our hearts have burned within us. In Winchester we had a charming set of young men, to whom I became much united in spirit, and with them I often took sweet counsel. Fry had laid down the carpenter's tools, and gone forth at the Master's bidding to labor in the vineyard. His brother Joseph was still pushing the plane, and Michael boot and shoemaking. Joseph Carson was making shoes, and Simon Lauk making guns. They all believed that they heard the Master say, 'Go ye also into my vineyard;' and they were using all diligence and exerting all their energies to get ready. I often visited their shops; found on the bench, or near at hand, the Bible, a grammar, logic, some book on science or theology—proofs, this, that they gave attention to reading—no filthiness, foolish talking or jesting, but such as was good to the use of edifying. They were young men, but sober-minded; and yet they had a cheerfulness and buoyancy of spirit that sweetened society, and made the heart better. O, brothers of my heart, how I loved them! As might have been expected, they all be-

came useful, yea, able ministers of the New Testament. I reached my circuit in poor plight, for I had traveled on Muskingum, Hocking, and Kanawha in 1800, and on Erie in 1801; and, as there were no missionary funds in those days, my purse was empty, and my clothes threadbare. Nevertheless I was not ashamed, for I believed I had been sent by Him who sent out his first missionaries without purse or scrip, while he himself had not where to lay his head, and they suffered from hunger, cold, and nakedness. Permit me now to mention my visit to the sick room and dying bed of General Daniel Morgan, that terrible thunder-bolt of war. The thunder and din of war had passed, and the hero had retired to wear in private life the fading laurels accorded to him by a nation. He reached out his hand, and looking me full in the face, said, 'O, sir, I am glad you have come to see me, and I hope you will pray for me, for I am a great sinner, about to die, and I feel that I am not prepared to meet my God.' I ventured to show him the way of salvation by faith in Him who suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, then prayed with him. He wept much, and I left him bathed in tears. Never did I see tears flow more copiously from man, woman, or child. Ah, thought I, how little can the honors or riches of the world do for poor man when death comes! There was some ground of hope in his death. I now took my plan of thirty-eight appointments, besides six or eight appointments at night, for the special benefit of the people of color, and went on, from day to day, with fear and trembling, feeling a deep sense of my great inadequacy. The territory of three large counties was embraced in our bounds, namely, Frederick, Berkeley, and Jefferson, and we must have rode near four hundred miles in

reaching all the appointments, as they stood arranged on the plan. The local preachers helped much, and our excellent host of young men of Winchester sallied forth like so many young Davids, each with his gospel sling and pouch of pebbles from the brook. In the mean time along came Asbury, giving us, as he passed through our circuit, six sermons, many exhortations, and prayer almost without ceasing; and commending us to the grace of God, on he went to Holston. Now the gospel car began to move gloriously, increasing in velocity to the end of the year, and we wound up with the addition of three hundred souls to the Church. O, glory! my soul gets happy while I think and write."

Pushing still farther westward and southward, we are again among the evangelists of the Holston Mountains. These heights are as watch-towers to them, and we find them, during these years, now descending to the westward, now to the eastward, "sounding the alarm" through all the wilderness, from the Blue Ridge to the farthest Kentucky and Tennessee frontier. Already the gospel was proclaimed, by Methodist itinerants, through most of the hither mountain valleys, those grand and fertile domains which stretch away, between their rocky barriers, from the interior of Pennsylvania through Virginia into North Carolina. Our present period opens with M'Kendree on a district which extends through Bottetourt County over the ridges and valleys to the Greenbrier, a stream that flows into the great Kanawha, and thence into the Ohio; and another district, under Philip Bruce, sweeping, in like manner, far westward over the more northward counties.

The year 1796 is memorable as the epoch of the formal designation of the Western field by the General Conference, as "The Western Conference," taking in Kentucky

and Tennessee, for years the only one in the valley of the Mississippi. In the Holston region itself we find now, in the outset, four immense circuits, under the presiding eldership of Jonathan Bird, and traveled by six itinerants, Burke being chief among them. Beyond them lies the vast opening westward field, all yet comprehended in one district, which is traveled by Kobler, who has six circuits and ten preachers under his care.

Among his itinerants is Benjamin Lakin, for many years an endeared name in the West. He was born in Montgomery County, Md., in 1767, but, infected with the emigrant spirit of the times, his family moved, in his childhood, to the Redstone frontier of Pennsylvania, and stopped not till they were located far among the canebrakes of Kentucky. Here the itinerants discovered them, and young Lakin became an ardent Methodist His hardy habits were congenial with the itinerancy, and Poythress had him out traveling as early as the winter of 1794. The next year he was on Greenville Circuit, the next on Danville, and in 1797 he was admitted to full membership in the Conference, ordained, and sent to Lexington. The following year, having married, he was compelled to locate. In three years he had provided for his family, and re-entered the itinerancy, and thenceforward performed incredible labors and travels in Kentucky and Ohio, till 1818, when his broken health required him to be placed on the supernumerary list, but with scarcely less devotion to his ministerial work. The Minutes say of him that in 1819 his health had so failed that he was wholly unable to perform the work of an effective traveling preacher, and he was placed on the superannuated list. This relation he sustained till he was removed from labor and suffering to his reward in heaven. "For many years it had

been his custom to have an appointment to preach every Sabbath, unless a quarterly or some other special meeting interfered, and at such meetings he helped us much in the Lord. Perhaps there never was a superannuated minister who labored so much, or was more useful. He had three appointments out at the time of his death."[13]

He was a giant amid those great revivals which prevailed in the West about the beginning of this century. One of his contemporaries says, that "in the greatest excitement the clear and penetrating voice of Lakin might be heard amid the din and roar of the Lord's battle, directing the wounded to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Day and night he was upon the watchtower, and in the class and praying circles his place was never empty, leading the blind by the right way, carrying the lambs in his bosom, urging on the laggard professor, and warning the sinner in tones of thunder to flee the wrath to come. While he was in the relation of a wornout preacher he never had a dumb Sabbath, always having his appointments ahead, except when quarterly or camp-meetings would intervene. He was always on hand at these, and would preach and labor with all his remaining strength. Great success attended his efforts, and he was universally accepted and beloved as a minister of Jesus. 'Father Lakin' did not suffer his calm, benignant features, in his last days, to be wrinkled with a sour godliness. There was no whining about everything going wrong in the Church and among the preachers. He had a contempt for croakers, and would look up and thank God for a good conservative progress in all the departments of Methodism. Quiet and peaceful and glorious,

[13] Minutes of 1849.

as when the descending sun throws his last rays on a receding world, tinging the trees and mountains with his mellow light, did this venerable servant of the cross pass down to the grave. He preached his last sermon in M'Kendree Chapel, Brown County, Ohio, on the 28th day of January, 1848.[14] In about a week afterward, visiting a Christian family, he sank down to the floor, and quietly expired in the eighty-second year of his age, and the fifty-fourth of his ministry. He was of ordinary height, but of "spare habit," excessively given to fasting or abstinence, of singularly tender conscience; but, "though sedate, there was a spice of quiet humor in his conversation." He was diligent in his self-culture, notwithstanding his local inconveniences for study, reading much, making abstracts of his books and outlines of sermons, and writing some of them entirely. "His appearance, in advanced life, was that of a cheerful, placid old man, and such indeed he was."[15]

In 1798 Bird and Poythress lead, as presiding elders, the Holston corps, though there is yet but one district; and we meet again the tireless Valentine Cook at the head of the solitary district which comprises the more western field, with its six long circuits and seven itinerants.

Before the close of the century Cook was broken down in health. He married, and settled in Kentucky, where he took charge of the Bethel Seminary, in Jessamine County, the first Methodist school of the West. He subsequently conducted a similar institution at Harrodsburgh, and, finally, located in Logan County, where he lived on a small farm, about three miles from Russellville. He devoted himself to education, and was esteemed

[14] Finley's Sketches, p. 183.
[15] Professor S. Williams, in Sprague, p. 273.

one of the best instructors in the West. Not a few eminent professional men were trained by him. Meanwhile he preached powerfully, not merely in his own vicinity, but often in extensive excursions through the state, and at quarterly meetings and camp-meetings. He was venerated as a saint for his singular piety; and it is probable that no man of his day wielded, in the West, greater power in the pulpit. "Prayer-meetings," says his biographer, "were established, classes revived, societies raised up, and new Churches organized, wherever his labors were employed, or his influence felt. There are hundreds, and perhaps thousands, still living throughout the great West, who, under God, are indebted to the instrumentality of Valentine Cook for all their hopes of immortality and eternal life."

The people believed that, like the original apostles, he "spoke from inspiration," and that by his prayers miracles were wrought among the sick. Marvels are told of the power of his word. A young preacher, who had never seen him, learning that he was expected to preach at a private house, rode some miles from his own circuit to hear the noted evangelist. On arriving he inquired if Cook was to preach that evening. "Yes," was the reply; "he has just walked out into the grove." His habits of devotion were proverbial, and as it was the custom among Methodist preachers of that day to prepare for preaching by hours of reading, meditation, and prayer in the woods, it was not difficult to conjecture the cause of his retirement. "Anxious to see one of the most extraordinary men of his age, I took," says the visitor, "a position on the portico that looks out upon the beautiful grove into which he had retired. At the approach of the venerable stranger, a sense of

awe came over me. There walked God's devoted ambassador, lacking only the seer's gift to make him an awful prophet. My thoughts and feelings were so concentrated upon him that I could scarcely speak. Valentine Cook was slightly above the medium height and size. There was no symmetry in his figure; his limbs, being disproportionately long, seemed more like awkward appendages than well-fitted parts of a perfect whole. He was what is called 'stoop-shouldered' to such a degree, that his long neck projected from between his shoulders almost at a right angle with the perpendicular of his chest. His head, which was of peculiar formation, being much longer than usual from the crown to the point of the chin, seemed rather suspended to than supported by the neck. A remarkably low forehead, small, deeply-sunken hazel eyes, a prominent Roman nose, large mouth, thin lips, a dark, sallow complexion, coarse black hair, with here and there a thread of gray, formed a *tout ensemble* in which nature seemed to have paid no regard to order, strength, or beauty. His singularly eccentric appearance, his homely apparel, and humble attitude, as he slowly approached the house, are imprinted upon my mind as vividly now as when, for the first time, I looked upon him as I sat in that little portico. He laid his hand gently upon my head, and in the most solemn accents said, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and God will give thee a crown of life.' He uttered not another word; these were enough. They seemed, as they fell from his lips, to possess a weight of meaning which I had never seen in them before, and made an impression upon my mind which thirty-six years of toil and affliction have not been able to obliterate. As the shadows of the night deepened, the people from town and country

began to assemble, and, though the rain was descending in torrents, every apartment of the house was soon filled to overflowing. The hour for preaching arrived, he took his position in the entry by a small table, upon which lay the 'old family Bible.' Resting his hand reverently on that blessed volume, he commenced repeating, in a somewhat indistinct undertone, the affecting hymn beginning with

'I saw one hanging on a tree
In agony and blood;
He fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near the cross I stood.'

Before he reached the last stanza his voice had become perfectly clear, and so pathetic and impressive, that many faces were suffused with tears. After reading the hymn, he raised the tune himself, and the audience united with him in singing. The prayer which followed was simple, solemn, and affecting. On rising from his knees he straightened himself up, and after looking round upon the congregation a few moments, without opening the Bible, on which his right hand again rested, he announced as his text, Mal. iv, 1: 'For, behold, the day cometh.' I occupied a seat immediately before him. I knew full well that I was in the presence of a great as well as good man. Every word that fell from his lips, and every expression of his countenance, proclaimed to all, as I verily thought, the transcendent goodness of his heart, the purity of his motives, and the elevated character of his purposes. Man's responsibility to God was the leading thought. In the commencement he dwelt at some length and with great effect on the all-pervading presence of Him with whom we have to do. Never until then had I been so deeply impressed with the fact that God was all around

me, above me, beneath me, within me. The sinfulness of sin and its dreadful consequences were portrayed in language and imagery most powerful and startling. I felt persuaded that no unconverted sinner, not wholly given up to hardness of heart, could listen to that discourse without exclaiming in the bitterness of his anguish, 'The arrows of the Almighty stick fast within me, and the terrors of God do set themselves up in array against me.' I could distinctly hear the partially suppressed groans and prayers that rose from different parts of the house. In conclusion, the great remedial scheme was brought to view. The ability and willingness of Almighty God, as revealed in Jesus Christ and him crucified, to save, to save now, to the uttermost and forever, were presented in such strains of simple, fervent, loving, melting eloquence, that the entire assembly was roused, excited, and overwhelmed. Some were pale with fear, others radiant with hope. Prayer and praises, cries and songs, were commingled. While the wail of awakened sinners was heard in various parts of the house, from other directions came the shouts of rejoicing saints. Christ, by his Holy Spirit, had spoken through his minister to the understandings and hearts of the people. The midnight watch had come and gone before the people could be induced to leave the strangely consecrated place. Such a sermon as that, for clearness, directness, power, and effect, I have never heard. I left at an early hour the next morning for a distant appointment, rejoicing in God for the privilege of having seen and heard such a man as Valentine Cook. I never saw him more." [16]

Such was this rare man, his appearance, his spirit, and his preaching. His habitual absorption, in prayer or

[16] "Biographical Sketch," p. 34.

study, gave him an air of singularity or eccentricity. He was absent-minded in company. In his devotional retirement in the woods, he would sometimes forget his congregations. He has been known to walk home from his appointments, leaving his horse behind, unconscious of the fact till reminded of it by his family. He loved music excessively, and felt that the old Methodist singing was one of the best preparations for powerful sermons. The young people of his neighborhood, who loved him much, gratified his taste by frequently serenading him at night. In 1819 he was impressed with the thought that his end was near. He wished once more to preach in some of his old fields, and "return home and arrange his affairs for an early departure to his inheritance above." He went preaching through Kentucky, parts of Ohio, and his old battle grounds in Pennsylvania. Passing on to Pittsburgh, New York, Philadelphia, he reached Baltimore, where he spent some time preaching "to vast crowds," and "scores and hundreds were converted through his instrumentality." He returned through the Greenbrier country of the Alleghanies, visiting his early friends, kneeling at the graves of his parents, giving his final warnings to the people, and re-entered his home in Kentucky singing a triumphant hymn. He settled his temporal affairs, and in the ensuing year died, uttering, as his last words, "When I think of Jesus, and of living with him forever, I am so filled with the love of God, that I scarcely know whether I am in the body or out of the body."

Good Henry Smith, whom we have so often met, was still braving the frontier trials of Kentucky. At the beginning of this period he was on Danville Circuit, where he was aided much by James M'Cull, once a stal-

wart itinerant, now broken down, and located, but still faithful. "I never," writes Smith, "saw a man more anxious to speak for God than my friend M'Cull; but this was out of the question. I, however, on two occasions saw him mount the stand, and look round on the congregation, the tears streaming down his face, and, in a half whisper, say a few words; and although half the congregation could not understand what he said, yet it ran like fire from heart to heart, till all were melted to tears. On one of these occasions I was deeply affected; it seemed as if my heart would burst. I certainly ought to have profited more by beholding such a spectacle, and hearing the lectures he sometimes gave me; for he was a charming, sweet-spirited man, and a humble Christian. I loved these people very much; but, thank the Lord, I never labored among a people that I did not love, and take a deep interest in their welfare: generally, the last I was with I loved the most. My last quarterly meeting was held at Jessamine meeting-house, April 22 and 23, 1797; and as our annual Conference was held at Bethel this year, we had all the Holston preachers at our meeting. Bishop Asbury was not with us, in consequence of affliction; and having the wilderness to go through, he was advised not to venture; but the great Head of the Church was with us, and it was a time of harmony and love among ourselves, and of great power in the congregation. Our business was done in peace; for there was no jealousy among our little band of brothers; no scrambling for the best circuits; (we had no stations;) if we got a bad circuit, we went to it with a willing mind, determined, if possible, to make it better; if we got a good circuit, we went with a cheerful heart, resolved to show ourselves worthy of a good place. From this Conference

I went to Salt River again; the Lord gave me favor in the eyes of these people, and also added seals to my ministry. In this circuit I got acquainted with the widow of Colonel Harden. He was a devoted Methodist. He was sent out, in company with another man, with a flag of truce to the Indians; but the savage wretches killed them both. This good sister was sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; often shouting aloud, and expressing the strongest confidence of meeting her beloved husband in heaven. Barnabas M'Henry, one of the early preachers, married into this worthy family: he was a man of strong mind, and able in argument, and stood upon the walls of our Zion, and defended her bulwarks when she was assailed by an enemy."

In 1798 he was under Poythress and Bird in Green Circuit, within the Holston District, and the next year reached Ohio, where he meets again his old friend, M'Cormick, and whither we shall soon follow him.

In 1799 the whole field, Holston, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and a circuit in Ohio, was one immense district under Poythress, with an apostolic band of twelve preachers, including such men as Burke, Kobler, Smith, and Sale.

John Sale was one of the most heroic evangelists and founders of western Methodism, though only five lines are given to his memory in the official Minutes, and we know not the precise place of his birth. He was born somewhere in Virginia in 1769,[17] and, about his twenty-first year, became a zealous Methodist. In 1796 he joined the itinerant evangelists, and was sent to Swanino Circuit, "in the wilds of Virginia, where he had his courage and fidelity tested in breasting the dangers and hardships of a pioneer preacher. His next circuit was the

[17] Minutes of 1828; Finley's Sketches, p. 185.

Mattamuskeet, in the lowlands of the state. Added to the necessary hardships connected with traveling this circuit, it was a very sickly region, and much dreaded by the itinerant; but as no scenes could disgust or dangers deter the preachers of those days, wherever, in the providence of God, their lot was cast, Sale went, in the name of his Master, and entered upon the work assigned him, ready to die."[18] From these preparatory trials he he went, in 1799, across the mountains to Holston Circuit. During four years he labored indefatigably in the Holston Mountains and among the Kentucky settlements. In 1803 he passed into the Northwestern Territory, and now, for nearly a quarter of a century more, he alternates between Ohio and Kentucky, a successful circuit preacher, a commanding presiding elder. Worn out by his ministerial labors, he fell at last in his work, in 1827, crowned with the veneration of the Church, and exclaiming, "My last battle is fought, and the victory sure! halleluiah!" One of the most eminent Methodist citizens of the country, who long enjoyed and prized the friendship of this humble but true evangelist, has recorded an estimate of him, and says: "He was a man of fine presence, of erect and manly form, and of great personal dignity. He was naturally of a social turn, and had excellent powers of conversation, though nothing ever fell from his lips that even approached to levity. I was always struck with the excellent judgment and accurate discrimination which he evinced in his social intercourse. His mind could not be said to be brilliant, and yet he sometimes produced a very powerful effect by his preaching. His distinct enunciation, earnest manner, and appropriate and well-digested thoughts, always secured to him the attention of his

[18] Finley, p. 186.

audience; but I have sometimes heard him, when, rising with the dignity, and in the fullness, of his subject, he seemed to me one of the noblest personifications of the eloquence of the pulpit. His words were never hurried. Without the least tendency to extravagance, there was still a luster in his eye, and a general lighting up of his features that revealed the workings of the spirit within. In some of his more felicitous efforts, I think I have heard him with as much interest as I have heard any other man. And I never heard him without being deeply impressed with the conviction that, among all the men known to me at that early period, I should have selected him as the man to fill up, under all circumstances, the measure of his duty. He was an eminently useful one, and he adorned every relation that he sustained, and every sphere that he occupied. His character was so pure that every one felt that it was formed by a close conformity to the Divine Model."[19]

[19] Chief Justice M'Lean, in Sprague, p. 257.

CHAPTER XX.

METHODISM IN THE WEST, CONTINUED: 1796-1804.

M'Kendree takes Charge of the Western Field — Poythress's Decline and Insanity — Introduction of Camp-Meetings — Remarkable Scenes at them — Grenade — David Young — Making a Circuit — The Southwest opens — Tobias Gibson at Natchez — He falls a Martyr to his Work — Recruits for the Field — Learner Blackman — Methodism in Ohio — M'Cormick — Dimmitt — Kobler sent to Ohio — Hunt and Smith there — The Miami and Sciota Circuits — Advance of the Church — Philip Gatch in the West — Kobler at the Grave of Gatch — M'Cormick's End — Sale in Ohio — Methodism in Cincinnati — At other points in Ohio — Bostwick in the Western Reserve — Methodism enters Indiana and Illinois — Benjamin Young — Hardships there — Methodism in Michigan — Planted at Detroit — Asbury in the West in 1797 — Terrible Trials there — He has to retreat — Returns in 1800 — Conference at Bethel, Ky. — Its Academy — The First Camp-Meetings — Sufferings on the route Eastward — Returns in 1801 — Conference in Tennessee — Back again in 1802 — Reposing on the Holston Heights — Conference at Bethel — The Bishop in a Storm — Reflections on his Sufferings — Again in the West in 1803 — Conference at Cynthiana, Ky. — Early Life in the West — Statistics.

The year 1800 was signalized in western Methodist history by the appearance of William M'Kendree at the head of the pioneer itinerants. Poythress, hitherto its chief representative man, was beginning to totter in both mind and body, and it now needed an able commander. Poythress has often appeared on the scene, and always as a giant among his greatest compeers. Few of the early itinerants did more to lay the foundations of the Church both east and west of the Mountains. He was one of the most zealous laborers for its educational interests, and fell a martyr to his devotion to that cause. He was the chief founder of the first Methodist seminary in the West—the Bethel Academy in Jessamine County,

Ky. Its edifice was a large brick structure of two stories, and it had incurred a considerable debt, which weighed down his noble mind till it sunk in ruins. All efforts of himself, Valentine Cook, and other co-laborers, to retrieve the institution failed, and Poythress lingered a wreck like his favorite project. At the session of the Western Conference, held at Bethel in 1802, an intimation was recorded in its journals of his "critical state of unaccountability." His name was ordered to be "left off the General Minutes;" but the Conference expressed itself as "tenderly concerned for his support and welfare, and therefore resolved that his name shall stand on our Journal;" and "further, that his name should be perpetuated on the Journal of this Conference."[1] Accordingly his name, after remaining among the elders during 1802 and 1803, but nowhere else, disappears from the Minutes.[2] This fact, together with a hasty allusion to him in Asbury's Journals, as late as 1810, has given the unfortunate impression that he apostatized. Asbury's brief, unqualified allusions to other men are often liable to such misinterpretation. Fortunately for our own feelings, as well as for the reputation of this great and good man, a living witness of Asbury's interview with him has unvailed the mystery, and shed a clear though saddened light on his grave, after doubt if not reproach has hung for half a century over his memory in much of our literature. Henry Boehm was the traveling companion of Asbury in the West at the time of Asbury's unfortunate record. Boehm says: On

[1] See Extracts by Bp. Morris, "from the Journals of the Western Conference" in Western Christ. Advocate, Jan. 8, 1851. A blank stands for Poythress's name in these extracts, but I am certain that I do not mistake it.

[2] Bangs records him (Alphabetic List) as "located" in 1801, but erroneously; there is no record of his location in the Minutes.

Monday we visited an old minister, one of the pioneers of the West, and the bishop makes this melancholy record. I never read it without pain: 'This has been an awful day to me. I visited Francis Poythress. If thou be he; but O how fallen!' Perhaps no record in his journals has been so little understood as this, and none is more liable to be misinterpreted. Some have supposed that he had fallen like wretched apostates who have made shipwreck of the faith; but it was not so, and the bishop would not willingly or knowingly have done the unfortunate brother injustice. My journal reads thus: 'Monday 15, we went with Brother Harris to see Francis Poythress, one of our old preachers. He *has been for ten years in a state of insanity, and is still in a distressed state of mind.*' This is the record I made over fifty years ago, and it was italicised as the reader now sees it. Francis Poythress was one of the leaders in our Israel. He was admitted into the traveling connection at the third Conference, held in 1776, with Freeborn Garrettson, Joseph Hartley, Nicholas Watters, and others. He was a pioneer of the West. In 1790, John Tunnel dying, Francis Poythress was appointed elder at the West, having five large circuits on his district, and on them were Wilson Lee, James Haw, and Barnabas M'Henry. We have not space to trace his history. His excessive labors shattered his system, and his body and intellect were both injured. About the year 1800 he became deranged, and a gloom settled down upon him not to be removed. When Asbury saw him he was shocked, contrasting his former look with his appearance then. He was then living with his sister, twelve miles below Lexington. Bishop Asbury never saw him more; death soon came to the relief of poor Francis Poythress, and none who knew him doubt

that he is among the clear unclouded intellects of the upper and better world."[3]

His old friend, Judge Scott, has paid a befitting tribute to his memory. "Poythress," he says, "was grave in his deportment and chaste in his conversation, constant in his private devotions and faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties. We have no recollection of his having ever disappointed a congregation, unless prevented by sickness or disease. As often as practicable he visited from house to house, instructed and prayed in the family. He was unwearied in his efforts to unite the traveling and local ministry as a band of brothers, so that their united efforts might be exerted in furthering the cause of God. As the weight of all the Churches in his district rested upon him, he sensibly felt the responsibility of his station, and put forth his utmost efforts to discharge, with fidelity, the important trusts which had been confided to him. The education of the rising generation he deemed to be intimately connected with the interests of the Church, and the result of that conviction was the erection of Bethel Academy. He was about five feet eight or nine inches in height, and heavily built. His muscles were large, and when in the prime of life, he was a man of more than ordinary muscular strength. He dressed plain and neat. When we first saw him, we suppose, he had passed his sixtieth year. His muscles were quite flaccid, eyes sunken in his head, hair gray, turned back, hanging down on his shoulders; complexion dark, and countenance grave, inclining to melancholy. His step was, however, firm, and his general appearance such as to command respect. He possessed high, honorable feelings, and a deep sense of moral obli

[3] Boehm's Reminiscences, p. 323.

gation. In general, he was an excellent disciplinarian. Among the eight pioneers of Methodism in Kentucky and Tennessee in the year 1788, the name of Francis Poythress stands pre-eminent. By these intrepid heroes of the cross the foundation of Methodism was laid in those states, on which others have since built, and others are now building. Their names ought to be held in grateful remembrance by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth; but among all, we are inclined to the opinion, there is not one of them to whom the members of our Church, in those states, owe a greater debt of gratitude than to Francis Poythress."[4]

We have seen M'Kendree tending westward for some years among the mountain appointments of Western Virginia, and witnessed his departure on his transmontane route with Asbury and Whatcoat, without his "money, books, or clothes." They passed over the mountains, down the Holston River, into Tennessee, into the valley of Church River, where, reaching a "station" on the outskirts of the settlements, they combined with other travelers to form a company, and, on the 27th of September, 1800, began their course direct to Kentucky. Wearied and sick, they reached Bethel Academy, Jessamine County, and there held the Western Conference in the first week of October, the first session of that body of which there remains any correct record.[5] Ten traveling preachers were present, including Asbury and Whatcoat; the session lasted but two days; two candidates were admitted on probation, one member located, fourteen local and four traveling preachers were ordained. Some of the members of the small body lingered long in the Church, but all have now gone to their rest.

[4] Finley's Sketches, p. 136. [5] Fry's Life of M'Kendree, p 45.

After the session Asbury, Whatcoat, and M'Kendree traveled and preached together, from the center of Kentucky to Nashville, in Tennessee, and thence to Knoxville, where they parted, M'Kendree returning to his great district, which comprised thirteen circuits, over which he went preaching night and day with an ardor befitting so grand a sphere, and such sublime results as he could justly anticipate for the rising commonwealths around him, whose moral foundations Methodism was now effectively laying. An extraordinary religious excitement spread over all the country. It was largely attributable to the introduction of camp-meetings at this time—a provision which, however questionable in dense communities, seemed providentially suited to these sparsely settled regions. In the latter part of 1799, John and William Magee, who were brothers, the first a Methodist local preacher, the second a Presbyterian minister, started from their settlement in Tennessee to make a preaching tour into Kentucky. Their first labors were with a Presbyterian Church on Red River, where remarkable effects attended their labors, and excited such general interest that, at their next meeting, on Muddy River, many distant families came with wagons and camped in the woods. This was, in fact, the beginning of religious "camp-meetings" in the United States.[6] The co-operation of the brothers, though of different creeds, presented a grateful example of Christian fellowship, and the settlers, of whatever faith, gladly copied it, so that the earliest camp-meetings were catholic or "union meetings," composed of Presbyterians, Methodists, and nearly every sect in the country. They soon became general through all the Western Territories, and, at last,

[6] In the Meth. Mag. for 1821, p. 189, is an account of these first meetings, from the pen of John M'Gee himself.

throughout the nation and Upper Canada. Ten, twenty, or more thousands attended them, devoting usually a week exclusively to religious exercises, living in tents or booths, which were arranged in circles around a rude pulpit or platform, and were illuminated at night by torches or pine-knots, and governed by prescribed rules and a temporary police. The poetic grandeur of the primitive forest, lit up at night by the stars above and the torches below, resounding with hymns which seemed like "the voice of many waters;" the powerful eloquence of the itinerants, who could hardly fail, in such circumstances, to reach their maximum ability; the opportunities of social greeting afforded by such assemblings to the dispersed settlers; and, above all, the religious enthusiasm which such unwonted and protracted exercises could not fail to produce, rendered the camp-meeting immediately a favorite occasion, and drew the people, as in armies, from all distances within two or three hundred miles. They soon bore the name of "general camp-meetings" from their catholic character, as combining all sects. As they were Presbyterian as well as, or even more than Methodist in their origin, Presbyterian clergymen were generally active in them. A great one was held in Cambridge, seven miles from Paris, Ky., soon after their introduction, which produced a general sensation; thousands of persons were present from all parts of the state, and even from Ohio; it continued a week. Hundreds fell to the earth as dead men under the preaching. At another, held at Cobbin Creek, Ky., twenty thousand were present; thousands fell as slain in battle,[1] and the religious interest of the whole state

[1] The number that fell at this meeting was reckoned at about three thousand, among whom were several Presbyterian ministers, who, according to their own confession, had hitherto possessed only a speculative knowledge of religion. Bangs's Hist., ii, p. 108.

seemed to be quickened by its results. Astonishing effects attended another on Desher's Creek, near Cumberland River; "the people fell under the power of the word like corn before a storm of wind." A young man of shattered mind and body, who for a long time had wasted to a shadow by religious melancholy and despair, was present; amid the falling hosts he also sunk down to the ground, but rose renewed in spirit and health, and being educated, and a man of ardent and poetic nature, became one of the most effective itinerants among the Holston heights and the settlements of Kentucky and Tennessee. The name of Grenade is still remembered among the elder Methodist families of the West. His revival hymns were once familiar through most of their circuits.

M'Kendree, as he passed over his vast district, promoted these meetings, and it was not long before the Methodist itinerants were thus making their word resound in all parts of the state. New societies were abundantly organized, and the Church assumed unprecedented vigor. At the close of his second year on the district seven new circuits had been formed, and the one district was divided into three. The mere handful of members, scattered here and there in the settlements, now numbered at least eight thousand, having increased more than five thousand in the last two years. The little Conference of twelve members had more than doubled its numbers. No small part of the impetus which had been given to the Western work was through the preaching and superior wisdom of M'Kendree as the presiding elder.[8]

One of the most interesting characters in Methodist biography was recorded in the appointments of 1802,

[8] Fry's M'Kendree, p. 65.

Jacob Young, a man of such evangelical simplicity and purity, such good sense in counsel, and perspicuity and pertinence in speech, so entertaining in conversation, and of such cordiality of manners, and saintliness of character, that the most obstinate opposers and most fastidious critics were won by him, notwithstanding the faithfulness of his admonitions, and some obvious defects made the more obnoxious to criticism by the peculiar recitative tone of his preaching. He survived far into our day, not only revered by, but endeared to all who knew him, by the peculiar charm of his character, as well as by his long and faithful public services. His simple narrative of his early travels and labors is one of the most entertaining records in the literature of the Church; and no book gives us more striking and characteristic, though transient, glimpses of early Western and early Methodist life.[9]

He was born on the western frontier of Pennsylvania, in Alleghany County, in 1776. His childhood was beset with Indian perils, and he grew up remarkable for activity and courage. His mind seemed to take, at a very early age, a spontaneous bias toward a religious life. In his fifteenth year he removed, with his family, into Kentucky, and settled on its frontier in Henry County. When he was about twenty-one years of age the Methodist itinerants reached his neighborhood, and his sensitive soul was soon wrestling with the problems of life, death, and eternity. He "wept bitterly" under the preaching of young Hunt, one of the earliest martyrs to the Western itinerancy, and a pioneer in Ohio as well as Kentucky. The youthful backwoodsmen fell under his word to the floor. "My tears flowed," he says, "my knees became feeble, I trembled like Bel-

[9] Autobiography of a Pioneer, etc. Cincinnati, 1857.

shazzar, the great deep of my heart was broken up." "Toward midnight God in mercy lifted up the light of his countenance upon me, and I was translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He began family prayer in his father's cabin, and it was not long before his "father, mother, and almost the whole family embraced religion, and were enrolled as Methodists." His brother Benjamin was among these converts, and became a preacher; the first who bore the standard of Methodism into Illinois.

In 1799 he was laboring as an exhorter amid the great revivals that then prevailed in Kentucky. In 1801 he was licensed as a local preacher. M'Kendree met him on his great district, "covering the whole of Kentucky and Tennessee," and extending into Ohio. "He had been but a few months," says Young, "on the ground when he understood perfectly his field of labor, moving day and night, visiting families, organizing societies, and holding quarterly Conferences. It was his constant practice to travel from thirty to fifty miles in a day, and preach at night. All classes of people flocked to hear him; statesmen, lawyers, doctors, and theologians of all denominations clustered around him, saying, as they returned home, 'Did you ever hear the like before?' Some, indeed, were so captivated, that they would say, 'Never man spake like this man.' He saw that the harvest was truly great, and the laborers few. Early in the morning and late in the evening, with streaming eyes he prayed God, with hands and heart uplifted, that he would send forth more laborers into the harvest. He was actively engaged in forming new circuits, and calling out local preachers to fill them. Whenever he found a young man of piety and native talent, he led

him out into the Lord's vineyard; and large as his district was, it soon became too small for him. He extended his labors to every part of Southwestern Virginia, then crossing the Ohio River, he carried the holy war into the state of Ohio, and there he formed new charges, and called out young men. They found that he gloried in doing the hardest of the work, and his example inspired them with the same spirit. M'Kendree, like a noble general, was always in the first ranks, followed by such men as Thomas Wilkinson, John Page, Lewis Garrett, and Jesse Walker. Under the supervision of these men the preachers were stationed. Throughout the length and breadth of the West, as far as the country was settled, M'Kendree was first in counsel, and first in action. If he appeared on a camp-ground every eye was upon him, and his word was law. In private circles, Quarterly Conferences, and Annual Conferences he was the master-spirit."

In 1802 M'Kendree summoned Young into the itinerancy. Happily, at one of his appointments on the circuit, lived Barnabas M'Henry. "I may truly say," writes Young, "he was a man by himself. He was, at least, fifty years before the time in which he lived. He had not a collegiate education, but was one of the best English scholars I ever saw. I feel myself greatly indebted to that good man for the instruction I received from him at that early period of my life."

He completed his first round of Salt River Circuit in six weeks, traveling five hundred miles, preaching fifty sermons, holding many class and prayer meetings, visiting many families, and rejoicing over this laborious field as the happiest scene of his life. "I now," he says, "began to feel myself pretty well harnessed for the battle. My soul had caught the missionary fire, and I

felt disposed to go on." A great revival spread over the circuit. His next scene of labor was Wayne Circuit, his colleague being James Gwinn, "then called Colonel Gwinn, afterward General Jackson's chaplain at the famous battle of New Orleans."

They divided their labors, proposing to form two circuits on Green River. The young evangelist had now strange work. He must form his own apointments, organize his Churches, and break his way through the wilderness as best he could. His record shows how such work was done in those times. "In two days," he says, "I arrived at Manoah Lasley's, where I spent a few days, rested my horse, and recruited my wardrobe. I found myself at a very great loss to know how to form a circuit in that vast wilderness, and had no one to instruct me. I preached, on Sabbath day, in Father Lasley's house, and set off on Monday on my great and important enterprise. I concluded to travel five miles, as nearly as I could guess, then stop, reconnoiter the neighborhood, and find some kind person who would let me preach in his log-cabin, and so on till I had performed the entire round."

He found his way full of difficulties; but they readily yielded to his charming manners and indomitable spirit. He met many northern Methodist settlers buried in the woods, for a long time without the means of grace, and who hailed him with rapturous welcomes. Our volume could be filled with thrilling incidents from his narrative, all of which are historical in their significance, if not in their local importance. Soon after he had started on his route he says: "I had a long ride through a dreary country. Late in the evening I came to a little log-cabin, standing in the woods, with no stable or outbuildings of any kind.

Seeing a woman in the door, I rode up and asked if I could stay all night; she seemed to think not. I paused a few moments, thinking what to do. I was afraid to go any farther, lest I should have to lie out all night. That I was afraid to do, as the weather was very cold, and there were always a great many ravenous wolves in the barrens. My life would be in danger, and there was nothing to encourage me to stay at this place. I knew I would have to tie my hungry, tired horse to a tree, without any shelter or food. The woman was unwilling to let me stay. She was not entirely alone, but had several children, and one daughter partly grown, which inclined me to think I could stay with safety. I finally concluded to let her know who I was, and what business I was on. I said to her, 'I am a Methodist preacher, sent by Bishop Asbury to try to form a circuit.' This information appeared to electrify her. Her countenance changed, and her eyes fairly sparkled. She stood some time without speaking, and then exclaimed, 'Has a Methodist preacher come at last? Yes, brother, you shall stay all night. Mr. Carson is not at home, but we will do the best we can for you with a glad heart.' I alighted from my horse, and went into the house. The children clustered around me as if some near friend had come. After having gone through with the usual ceremonies, my next concern was to take care of my horse. Their oldest daughter, a pleasant girl, provided me with a halter, and directed me to a suitable tree where my horse could stand. I soon found I was to have a comfortable night's rest. They furnished me with plenty of good sound corn for my horse. The cabin, and what little furniture they had, was neat and clean. Supper was soon served up, just such as suited me, corn-bread, fried ven-

ison, and crop-vine tea. Mrs. Carson then told me her history. She and her husband were both raised in North Carolina. They both experienced a change of heart when young. Her husband had been class-leader for some years before he left his native state. They had emigrated in order to buy land for their children. They had purchased a pretty large tract on one of the tributaries of Green River, lying about ten miles from where they then lived, and her husband was now at work on their own land. He had cleared out a small farm, and built a tolerable large house, which he was finishing. By the time I came round again they would have it ready for me to preach in. I spent the evening pleasantly, and by the time day dawned was on my way in search of another appointment. My ride was along the dividing ridge between Green River and Salt River. In the evening I stopped at the house of a man by the name of Honnel. He was in pretty good circumstances for that country, had a convenient house, and very willingly opened it for preaching. I stayed all night, and the next day preached to a small congregation; had some encouragement, and in the afternoon went on my way rejoicing. Late in the evening I came to a Mr. Cooper's. He was a local preacher; but, from the manner in which he received me, I thought he took me for an impostor. In family prayer he officiated himself. The family were reserved, and I had nothing to say. They fed my horse, gave me my supper, and a place to sleep. Next morning they told me I might preach. The word was circulated, and at eleven o'clock the congregation began to come together. The first man that came was a Seceder; as I had been reared among Seceders, he became much attached to me, and gave me all the encouragement he

could. I tried to preach, God gave me great freedom of speech, and we had an excellent meeting, and Brother Cooper wept much. Here we organized a small class, and, having tarried one night longer, the next morning I started early. Brother Cooper and his wife went with me. About ten o'clock we halted at Mr. M'Cowan's. Here I was astonished to find a large congregation assembled. This being the Sabbath, they had come, hoping to meet the preacher, hearing there was one on his way to form a circuit. The house was a large, double cabin, with both rooms full, and a good many in the yard. I saw many Methodists among them, and they were singing Methodist hymns in a revival spirit. I spent most of the afternoon in class-meeting. This was truly a good day to my soul, and to the souls of many others. Here I found a class of about fifty members ready formed to my hand. I took some pains to learn the history of this society. It was formed by a local preacher who had resided several years in that vicinity. I regulated the society, appointed a class-leader, etc., and went on, bearing toward the Crab Orchard. I preached at Mr. Samuel Stewart's, and found a small class. Here I regulated matters, and appointed a class-leader. In this neighborhood I found a great many Baptists, who received me as the Lord's messenger. I felt myself at home, and would gladly have spent days in the place, but my work was before me. Before night I met with a man, who gave me a cordial invitation to preach in his house, where, finding a small society already organized, I made them a class-paper, appointed them a leader," etc.

Thus had Methodism, by its peculiar practical system, been working like leaven all through these obscure

regions. It trained its humblest people to labor in religion, and some of the humblest were the most useful. Young now met another striking example. He found a man who could exhort, and forced him nto the service. They "traveled about twenty miles on Fishing Creek, and put up with an old gentleman by the name of Chappel. This was a curious neighborhood. Several things, worthy of remark, came under my observation. There was a Methodist society here, the preacher of which was a colored man by the name of 'Jacob.' I believe every member had been awakened under his preaching, and, by the assistance of Mr. Chappel's daughters, he had organized them into a class. One of the girls made out a class-paper, and they appointed Jacob leader. He was both preacher and leader; and, although he could not read a word, he could preach a good sermon. He had a kind master, who would read for him Saturday evenings; and when a text was read that suited Jacob, he would ask his master to read it again, memorize the text, book, chapter, and verse; then he was ready for his work The next day was the Sabbath. The congregation was large, and I found his society in excellent order. I preached several times, and left this delightful place on Monday morning. I moved on toward the West. Some time after dark, and while stopping at a tavern, a man called at the door. Being asked what he wanted, he inquired if there was not a Methodist preacher there. I heard him, and was soon on the porch. He said he understood I was forming a circuit through that country, and wanted me to take in his house for one of the appointments. I asked him how far off he lived. 'Ten miles.' I replied, 'I will go with you to-night.' At a very late hour we arrived at a small log-cabin. He

kindled a fire on the hearth, the light shone brightly, and I took a close view of everything within. I am sure it would have frightened anybody but a backwoodsman. There was no floor in the house. They had leveled off the ground, and made it somewhat smooth. There were hickory poles laid across in the place of joists. Some clapboards laid on these poles constituted the upper floor. There was neither bedstead, chair, nor table in the house. Some small stakes or forks had been driven down in the west corner of the cabin; they laid two round poles in the forks, and placed clapboards on these poles. This was their bedstead. Some bedding, such as it was, formed all the sleeping place I saw for the man and his wife. The little negro boy slept on the ground floor with a deerskin under him. I saw no cupboard furniture, excepting some earthern bowls of inferior quality. The woman of the house was badly crippled. I felt rather melancholy, and my mind began to run back to days of other years, when I was dwelling among my own people in ease and plenty; here I was in a strange land, without friends or money. The squalid appearance of the inside of the house made an impression on my mind that never can be erased. Surrounded by these gloomy circumstances, I had no friend to fly to but the Redeemer. I kneeled down and prayed, and the Lord blessed me. I felt happy and resigned to my lot. The next thing was to make my bed, and lie down to sleep. I spread, for my bed, a blanket that I kept under my saddle, and took a stool for my pillow. I had another blanket on which I rode; this I used for a sheet. My saddle bags on the stool made my pillow soft, my overcoat became my covering. I thanked God that I had a pretty comfortable bed. I thought within myself, I am better off

than my Saviour was, for he 'had not where to lay his head;' and far happier than the rich, who roll on beds of down, and enjoy all the luxuries of life. I had a comfortable night's rest, and rose in the morning much refreshed, and prepared for my day's labor. Breakfast was soon served up on a board bench. It consisted of cornbread and milk, but no spoons. When I turned up the bowl to drink, a black ring would make its appearance from the sediments in the bottom. Breakfast being over I retired to the woods, and spent the forenoon in reading and praying till preaching time. Returning, I saw the cabin pretty well filled with men and women. Although it was late in November, many of them had neither hats nor bonnets on their heads, nor shoes on their feet. I took my stand opposite the door, read a hymn, began to sing, and while I was singing, a remarkable man made his appearance. He was so distinguished from other men, that I will give some account of him. He was very large, with strongly-marked features. From the muscles of his face I perceived that he was a man of strong natural courage. He had a high forehead, very wide between the eyes, with a broad face; his whole form was well proportioned, his eyeballs remarkably large, showing a great deal of white. He fixed his eyes upon me, and looked as if he were scanning my whole person. Had I not been used to seeing rough men on the frontier of Kentucky, I should have been frightened. I looked him full in the eyes, and scanned him closely. His hair appeared as though it had never been combed, and made me think of old Nebuchadnezzar, and his head 'like eagles' feathers.' He wore no hat; his collar was open, and his breast bare; there was neither shoe nor moccasin on his feet. I finished my hymn, kneeled down and prayed, and

took my text to preach. The man looked for no seat, but stood erect, gazing on me. Before I was half through I saw the tears roll down his rough cheeks. I closed, and told them that on that day four weeks I would be there again. I rode away, but could not forget the big man. I was sure he had distinguished himself some way, which made me anxious to find out his history. I soon learned that he was brother-in-law to the famous robber, Micajah Harp, a character so well known in the history of the West. No doubt they had been together in many a bloody affray. On my next round he joined the Church, and soon afterward became a Christian. He could neither read nor write. I procured him a spelling-book. His wife taught him to read, and he soon learned to write. On my third or fourth round I appointed him class-leader. He trimmed off his hair, bought a new hat, clothed himself pretty well, and became a respectable man. I heard of him several years afterward, and he was still holding on his heavenly way."

Such facts show the times, and the manner in which Methodism met them, better than could whole chapters of dissertation. In almost all the settlements Young had similar adventures and success, and left them, followed with the blessings of the people, who were hungry for the word of life. "The people gathered around me," he says, in speaking of his leave-taking in a neighborhood, which was an example of most of them; "some talked, others shouted, I wept. I mounted my horse, and rode away. While passing through a dense forest I said to myself, 'These are great and glorious days!' I was thankful that I had left father, mother, and all the world, to preach the gospel to perishing sinners. Coming to a little cabin standing in the barrens, I tarried all night

there, preached next morning, and in the afternoon rode to the Rev. Noah Lasley's, the place where I began to form a circuit. I had been gone three weeks, and had formed a full four-weeks' circuit. Not having one resting day in the whole plan, I sat down, wrote out my plan, and, having reviewed and corrected it several times, felt well satisfied. I compared myself to a man settled in a wilderness, who had built his cabin, surveyed his land, and was preparing to clear his farm. I laid aside my books and papers, and, like Isaac, walked into the woods to meditate. I thought I was one of the happiest mortals that breathed vital air."

At the close of the year he says: "I received but little money, not quite thirty dollars, for my whole year's labor. The women made me cotton clothes, and I wore them quite contentedly. This was the best year of all my life. I performed ten entire rounds on that circuit, and closed my year with a protracted meeting on a delightful eminence. The windows of heaven were opened, and God poured out such a blessing that there was not room to contain it. The congregation was so large that we held prayer-meetings in many places under the shade-trees. The work went on with increasing rapidity till the middle of the next week, when I gave them my valedictory. I had never seen such a meeting before, and never expect to again. I mounted my horse, and, riding away, left them shouting and praising God, and have never seen them since. Rev. Thomas Wilkinson came on in the place of the presiding elder, and took the supervision of this meeting. He preached like an apostle, often falling on his knees. Wilkinson and Garrett were two of the greatest and best men I ever knew. They were among the early pioneers of the West. What these men did and suffered for Methodism in the

West will never be known till the books are opened at the last day." He had taken three hundred members into the Church on his new circuit. I have given these abundant citations because they illustrate a curious problem, forming the only account, so far as I know of the manner in which a new circuit was formed by the early itinerants of Methodism.

We are tempted to linger over his interesting pages, but must hasten. He went to the Conference of 1803, and gives us a glance at that session, so little known, but so momentous for the moral welfare of the valley of the Mississippi. "It was held," he says, "in the house of Benjamin Coleman, near Cynthiana, Kentucky. Next morning I repaired to the Conference room, which was about eighteen feet square, and up stairs. I was dressed like a backwoodsman. My manners and costume were answerable to the description given of 'Rhoderick Dhu,' of Scotland, by Walter Scott. I hesitated. At length I ascended the stairs, and entered the Conference room. There, for the first time, I saw the venerable Asbury, seated on a chair, elevated by a small platform. He was writing, his head white as a sheet. Several of the preachers said, 'Come in, come in, Brother Young.' The bishop raised his head, lifted his spectacles, and asked who I was. M'Kendree told him my name. He fixed his eye upon me as if he would look me through M'Kendree saw I was embarrassed, and told me kindly to take a seat. Business went on, and I sat as a silent spectator. I thought they were the most interesting group of men I had ever seen. M'Kendree appeared the master-spirit of the Conference. Burke, very neatly dressed, was secretary. His auburn head, keen black eye, showed clearly he was no ordinary man. I still remember most of the members' names: Thomas Wil

kinson, John Watson, Benjamin Lakin, Samuel Doughty, John Adam Grenade, Lewis Garrett, William Crutchfield, Benjamin Young, Ralph Lotspeich, Anthony Houston, and some few more not now recollected. These were members of the great Western Conference, comprehending Kentucky, Ohio, Southwestern Virginia, old Tennessee, and the Mississippi territory. This year they sent missionaries to Illinois and Indiana. In a beautiful grove, a mile from Mr. Coleman's, they erected a stand, and seats to accommodate a congregation. The Conference adjourned every day, that the preachers might attend public services. As I was not in full connection I had no seat in the Conference; but I was free to go and come as I pleased. We kept up prayer-meetings nearly all the time. There was a great deal of good preaching during the session, and I have no doubt but much good was done at that time. There was an extensive revival all through Kentucky. On Sabbath Bishop Asbury preached one of his masterly sermons to about ten thousand listeners. This was a very solemn and profitable day. On Tuesday I was appointed to preach. The congregation was still very large, and the cross was heavy. I mounted the stand in my rough costume; every eye was fixed upon me. My voice was both strong and clear. I preached upward of two hours, and wound up with a pleasant gale. Many of the preachers hung around me and wept, and bade me Godspeed. It seemed as if the whole assembly wanted to shake hands with me. I sat long in the pulpit weeping and praising God. These were days of the Son of God with me."

His appointment was to Clinch Circuit, where he had many a romantic encounter. In the last year of our present period he was traveling the Holston Mountains,

where we must leave him, but to meet him often hereafter, for he is henceforth to be one of the chief heroes of Western Methodism, from Ohio to Mississippi, and to survive most of his itinerant compeers.

In 1802 a very striking appointment appears on the roll of the Western Conference, that of "Natchez," with the solitary name of Tobias Gibson attached as preacher. Natchez, however, was obscurely recorded, with Gibson's name, two years earlier, as on the Georgia District, which fact only made the record appear the more extraordinary, for the immense territories which are now the two large states of Alabama and Mississippi, lay between Georgia and this point on the Mississippi River. The remote appointment appeared as a new sign in the far-off Southern heavens; to the pioneer preachers of Kentucky and Tennessee it was as the constellation of the cross to mariners in the Southern Seas. It opened a boundless prospect of progress; and the word Natchez sounded like a new order of march to the itinerants and their cause—that march which they have since made over Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, even to the Pacific boundary of California.

Tobias Gibson was worthy of the pioneer mission, and was soon worthily to fall a martyr to his heroism, but not without opening the way, never to be closed, for the southwestern triumphs of the Church. He was a saintly man, of vigorous intellect, "greatly given to reading, meditation, and prayer;"[10] very "affectionate and agreeable" in his manners. He was born in Liberty County, Georgia, in 1771, where he owned a valuable patrimony, which he forsook for the gospel. Joining the itinerancy in his twenty-second year, he traveled for eight years large circuits, mostly in the far

[10] Minutes, 1805.

South, but one of them, as early as 1795, among the Holston Mountains. We have heretofore seen him encountering with Asbury formidable hardships. In 1799[11] he volunteered to go to the distant Southern banks of the Mississippi, though he was already broken in health by excessive labors and privations. With the approval of Asbury he started alone, and made his way on horseback to the Cumberland River, in Kentucky, traveling hundreds of miles through the wilderness, mostly along Indian trails. At the Cumberland he sold his horse, bought a canoe, and, putting his saddle-bags and a few other effects upon it, paddled down the river into the Ohio, and thence, six or eight hundred miles, down the Mississippi to his destination, where he immediately began his labors, eighteen years before the Mississippi Territory became a state of the Union.

Four times he went through the wilderness, six hundred miles, among "Indian nations and guides," to the Cumberland, for the purpose of obtaining additional laborers from the Western Conference. In 1803 he presented himself before that body a broken-down hero, and, though needing recruits themselves, they spared him Moses Floyd, for the solitary veteran had gathered more than fourscore (87) members at Natchez, and the whole country was ready for the gospel. By the next Conference there were more than a

[11] The Minutes indicate 1800 as the date, but he really arrived at Natchez in the spring of 1799. There is "demonstrative evidence" of the latter fact "from private family records."—Notice of Rev. James Griffing, by Rev. J. G. Jones, in the "New Orleans Christian Advocate." The date of this "Notice" I have lost, though I have the "article" on file. Bishop Wightman, in an allusion to Gibson, (Biog. Sketches of Itinerant Ministers, p. 29. Nashville, 1858,) gives 1799 as the true year. Such an epoch is not without importance, not only to the locality but to the general Church.

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hundred Methodists reported from it, and Hezekiah Harriman and Abraham Amos were sent to aid the two evangelists; but the apostle of the little band was about to fall at his post; he had over-worked. Harriman made his way thither through "thirteen days and twelve nights' toil in the wilderness," and soon witnessed a "revival" and formed the Washington Circuit; but he wrote back that Gibson was sinking; "his legs were swelled up to his knees," he had "violent cough," and had not been able to preach for months. "Tell my dear brethren, the young preachers," adds Harriman, "not to be afraid of this place, for God is here, and souls have been converted this winter in public and private, and others are inquiring the way to heaven. Here are also a great many souls that must die like heathens, except they are visited by faithful ministers of the gospel. My hope revives that God will pour his Spirit on us more abundantly, and that our brethren will come and help us."[12] Twenty days later Harriman wrote, "Brother Gibson has gone to his long home." He preached his last sermon on New Year's Day, 1804, "and it was profitable to many souls." After having suffered for three years with consumption, he "was seized with fever and vomited blood." He died in Claiborne County, on the 5th of April, 1804. He had "continued to labor in the vineyard of the Lord as long as he was able to preach or pray," and declared to his fellow-laborer that "he was not afraid to meet death," and "wished for the hour." His brethren, in the Old Minutes, 1805, commemorate him with admiration, and say, "When Elijah was taken away there was an Elisha: we have two valuable men that will supply his place; but still Gibson opened the way; like a Brainerd he

[12] Extracts of Letters, etc., p. 95. New York, 1805.

labored and fainted not, nor dared to leave his station till death gave him an honorable discharge. Tobias Gibson did for many years preach, profess, possess, and practise Christian perfection; and those who were acquainted with him must be impressed with his depth of piety; infidelity itself would stagger before such a holy, loving, and devoted man of God." The pioneer martyr of the Southwest had done a great work, and his sublime example will never be forgotten by the Church. In the autumn of the year of his death Learner Blackman, one of the noblest itinerants of the West, went to take his place, and a succession of evangelists followed till Methodism spread out over all the country.

Of Learner Blackman we have had a transient glimpse, in New Jersey, his native state, where John Collins, his brother-in-law, and afterward his co-laborer in the West, was guiding him in his early religious life. He now, and for some years, becomes almost ubiquitous in Western Methodism, south of the Ohio. He was born about the year 1781; the exact date is unknown. His early education was religious, but he owed his conversion to John Collins, in about his sixteenth or seventeenth year. In 1800, when not nineteen years old, he joined the Philadelphia Conference, traveled two years in Delaware, and, in 1802, threw himself among the pioneers of the Western Conference. After itinerating, with much success, three years in Kentucky, he was sent in 1804[13] to take the place of Gibson. "Here," say his brethren, "a new scene presented itself to his view. He is now to face uncivilized nations, and a wilderness of four or five hundred miles. After a journey

[13] His appointment to Natchez appears first in the Minutes of 1805; but the Western Conference, then reported, was held in October, 1804. This irregularity of dates affects many other matters of Western Methodist history in these early times.

of ten or eleven days, and lying out as many nights, making his saddle-bags his pillow, his blanket and cloak his bed, the heavens his covering, the God of Israel his defense, he arrived safe in the territory. At the time of his arrival Methodism was in its infancy in that country. Notwithstanding there were some respectable men and women friendly, yet it is a lamentable truth, that a number of the first settlers of that country were bankrupts in morals, and their proud hearts and irreligious lives made them oppose the truths which this, as well as other good men, delivered. As such, our first preachers in those parts had considerable difficulties. We may venture to affirm that they were the subjects of almost universal contempt; and Blackman shared largely in these sufferings. In 1806 he was appointed to preside in the Mississippi District: God honored his ministrations with success, sinners were converted, and houses were built and dedicated. In 1807 he still presided in the district; his labors were still blessed, souls were converted, and he left the low lands, followed by the blessings of the people."[14]

When he left the Southwest it had a large district, five circuits, six preachers, and more than four hundred (415) members. Returning to Tennessee he labored faithfully on various circuits and districts till 1815, when, crossing the Ohio in a ferry-boat, his horse was frightened and threw him into the river, where he perished, "an event which caused the heart of the whole Church to throb with sadness." He ranks as one of the great men of early Methodism. "He had the appearance, both in and out of the pulpit," says a contemporary authority, "of being quite a cultivated man." In stature he was about the middle height, well-formed.

[14] Minutes, 1816.

with a full face, and an eye which shone with the light of genius. Every feature became strikingly expressive while he was preaching or conversing. "He was an eloquent divine," says one of his fellow-itinerants, and "perhaps under the labors of no one, in his day, were the borders of our Zion more enlarged, in the lengthening of her cords and the strengthening of her stakes."[15]

While the range of Western Methodism was thus extending southward, it was also advancing in the opposite direction into the great Northwestern territory. We have traced its introduction and first movements there under the agency of M'Cormick. Repeatedly did this faithful local preacher go over to Kentucky to solicit itinerants from the Conference, but none could yet be spared from their urgent work. Meanwhile laymen, like himself, were planting the Church. He met in Kentucky Ezekiel Dimmitt, a young emigrant from Berkeley County, Va., where he had been received into the Church by Joshua Wells. M'Cormick urged him to move into the Northwestern Territory, and help to found Methodism and a new state there. Dimmitt, full of religious and patriotic ardor, went in 1797, and built his cabin on the east fork of the Little Miami, not far below the present town of Batavia. He was eight or ten miles from any neighbor, but attended M'Cormick's class, twelve miles distant on the little Miami, near the present Milford. He became a powerful coadjutor with M'Cormick. His home was long a lodging and preaching appointment of the itinerants, and he deservedly ranks among the founders of the denomination in Ohio.[16] He "possessed extraordinary physical strength, and his

[15] Rev. J. B. Finley.

[16] See a sketch of him, by Rev. J. F. Wright, in West. Christ. Adv., January 20, 1866.

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great muscular power seems to have been made an auxiliary to his usefulness. By it he was enabled to suppress disturbances that would sometimes occur at seasons of worship in the newly settled country. No man, knowing his tremendous force, was willing to come within reach of his iron grasp. Disorderly persons, who happened to be so unfortunate, were sure to be subdued, finding resistance entirely useless. Indeed, he seemed fully persuaded that it was better for such as were possessed of evil spirits to be delivered, even if they were torn a little, than to remain under the power of demons."

At last M'Cormick's appeal to the Conference was answered by the mission of Kobler, who, on the second of August, 1798, "preached the first sermon delivered in the territory by a regularly constituted Methodist missionary." "He administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at a regularly appointed quarterly meeting at M'Cormick's, held on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth days of December, 1798. This was the first time the Methodists had partaken of the sacrament in the territory," etc.[17]

We have from Kobler's own pen an allusion to his expedition.[18] In passing through the country he found it in its almost native, uncultivated state. The inhabitants were settled in small neighborhoods, few and far between, with little or no improvement about them. No house of worship had been yet erected. The site on which Cincinnati now stands was a dense forest. No improvement was to be seen but Fort Washington, which

[17] Report of a committee of the Quarterly Conference of Milford Circuit, on the introduction of Methodism into that part of Ohio, cited in "Life of Gatch," p. 136.

[18] In a communication from him to the Western Historical Society in 1841. See Finley's "Sketches," etc., p. 169.

was built on the brow of the hill, and extended down to the margin of the river; around it were cabins, in which resided the first settlers of the place. This fortress was then under the command of General Harrison, and was the great place of rendezvous for the federal troops, which were sent by the government to guard the frontiers against the Indians. Forty years later Kobler, in revisiting the country, landed at Cincinnati, and wrote that he came from aboard the steamboat Bristol, and walked through a considerable part of the city; but had no language to express his reflections while comparing the past with the present. He went from street to street, and from square to square, for more than half a mile, wondering and admiring at the great change. Having, he says, since arriving in Cincinnati, traveled over many parts of his old missionary ground, he finds a most astonishing improvement has taken place. Where formerly there were indistinct paths, sometimes only trees being blazed to direct his course from one house or settlement to another, now there are highly improved roads and turnpikes, and every facility for public conveyance. And where there stood unbroken forests, now there are numerous villages and large towns, numbering their thousands. He spread the first table for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that was seen northwest of the Ohio. When the communicants were called to approach it, the number did not exceed twenty-five or thirty; and this was the sum total of all that were in the country. Now the Minutes of the Annual Conferences of Ohio returned one hundred thousand regular Church members; so mightily had the word of God run and prevailed! "Where," he continues, "we once preached in log-cabins, we now see stately churches, whose spires

point toward heaven, and whose solemn bells announce the Christian Sabbath, and call the attention of the multitude to the house of God. This is indeed the Lord's doing! Your aged servant has been standing on the walls of our Zion for fifty-five years; and while, with unwearied vigilance, he has been guarding and laboring for the interests of the Church, he has been making strict observations on circumstances and things connected with the Church; and from long observation he has been fully convinced, and of late more so than ever, that it is the doctrine which we preach, the discipline which we have exercised, and the system by which, as a Church, we are regulated, that have produced these happy results in the conversion and sanctification of so many thousands."

When he crossed the Ohio in 1798 "at a little village called Columbia," he fell upon his knees upon the shore, and prayed for the divine blessing upon his mission. "That evening," he writes, "I reached the house of Francis M'Cormick. He lived ten or fifteen miles from Columbia, on the bank of the Little Miami River. On Thursday, August 2, I preached at his house to a tolerable congregation on Acts xvi, 9: 'And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.' It was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, who gave testimony to the word of his grace. The little band was much rejoiced at my arrival among them, together with the prospect of having circuit preaching and all the privileges and ordinances of our Church." After spending five days in and near Milford, Kobler and M'Cormick started out on the first missionary circuit ever traced in the Miami country, if not the entire Northwest Terri-

tory. They traveled up to the head-waters of the Miamis and Mad Rivers, to the outskirts of the white population, and returned southward down the Great Miami to its mouth, and thence eastwardly to Milford, the place of beginning. This circuit embraced about one half the territory now included in the Cincinnati Conference.

After seeing Methodism well established on the north bank of the Little Miami, M'Cormick once more changed his location, and settled in Hamilton County, about ten miles east of Cincinnati. "Here again his ardent soul went out in prayer and ministerial effort for the conversion of his neighbors, and again God set his seal of approbation to the labors of his devoted servant. A class was soon formed, and the neighborhood supplied with regular circuit preaching, M'Cormick pushing out in all directions to open the way for the itinerants. This class was the beginning of what has been long and widely known as the 'Salem Society,' and in early times became identified with the old White Oak Circuit, from the bounds of which nearly fifty preachers have been raised up for the regular work of the Methodist ministry. Among this number were Winans, Light, Simmons, M'Clain, Eddy, Raper, Christie, Baughman, Foster, holding in reserve a long list, having as honest, though perhaps not so wide a fame. This class, the germ of the Salem society, was formed in M'Cormick's new double log-cabin. It cannot now be asserted who had the honor to pronounce the dedicatory address in this primitive 'Church in the wilderness;' but we know that its pulpit, a space behind the chair upon the white ash floor, was afterward occupied by such men as Bishops Whatcoat, Asbury, M'Kendree, George, and Roberts, as well as by the chief lights of our early

Western ministry. This cabin was one of the principal land harbors into which those men put for shelter, provision, and repair. Here was held many a bishop's council, for our local preacher was one of those wise and judicious men whom a bishop might safely consult."[19]

Kobler labored and traveled night and day in the territory for about nine months. He wrote: "The houses here are very small, often with only one room and fireplace, around which the whole family, children, dogs, and all, crowd, and seem to claim the same privileges, and possess equal rights. Frequently I sit on one stool or bench, and eat off another, which serves as a table. This domestic order I ever met with good humor, being taught by experience for years to 'know how to be abased, and how to abound.' In all things and everywhere to be instructed 'both to be full and to be hungry.' When we retire for private devotion, and approach a throne of grace, we kneel down by the side of a tree in snow knee deep; yet even this is a gracious privilege. There are no candles to be had for night reading and study. We take a parcel of clarified beeswax, while in a warm state, and roll out a tube in the shape of a candle, one end of which is rolled into a coil, so as to set on the table, which answers for a candlestick, the other end projects perpendicular, and gives the light. This construction is very portable, and can be taken out in the saddle-bags. In the daytime we had recourse to the woods for reading the Bible, and studying divinity. Thus, seated on an old log, many a sermon has been composed, which, on returning to the house, has been preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Horses usually had to be tied to a tree or fence."

[19] Rev. J. W. Fowble, in Ladies' Repository, March, 1860.

He continued in the itinerancy till 1819, when he located; but the Baltimore Conference, without his solicitation, put his name upon its honored roll of superannuated preachers in 1836. He died in Fredericksburgh, Va., in 1843, aged seventy-four years. His last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus; come, Lord Jesus, in power; come quickly!"[20]

On Kobler's return to Kentucky Lewis Hunt was sent to the territory, and in 1799 the Miami Circuit, the first Methodist appointment in Ohio, appears in the Minutes, with the name of Henry Smith as preacher.[21] Dimmitt's house was on Hunt's circuit, and was made a preaching place; it was a cabin about sixteen feet square. Here was commenced a small class, consisting of Ezekiel Dimmitt and Phœbe his wife, Samuel Brown and Susan his wife. At this time there were very few settlers in that section, and the country was almost a trackless wilderness, with no public roads except those which had been temporarily opened for the army engaged a short time before in the frontier war with the Indians. Dimmitt usually accompanied the preacher, removing the obstructions, and breaking bushes to guide him when he should have no pilot. No effort or sacrifice was too much for the zealous layman to make for the good cause.

Smith says: "Lewis Hunt, a young man from Kentucky, was appointed to travel the Miami Circuit, in the year 1799, by the presiding elder. We had heard that he was broken down, and I was sent to take his place. On the fifteenth of September I set out, in company with M'Cormick, to meet Hunt on Mad River. We

[20] Minutes, 1844.

[21] Hunt's name is not recorded in connection with the appointment, as Smith was sent to relieve him before the appointments were published. See Smith's Recollections, p. 310.

met him at Hamor's, and found him so far recovered as to be able to go on in his work. My instructions were, that if he should be able to continue, to go up to Scioto and form a circuit there. We consulted our friends, and formed the plan of uniting Scioto to Miami, and making a six weeks' circuit of it. This plan was, however, abandoned on account of the great distance between the circuits, and the dismal swamp we would have to pass through every round." The distance between the two streams was nearly one hundred miles, and the swamp was nearly twenty miles in extent. He organized therefore a separate circuit, the Scioto, nearly four hundred miles in range. He found several classes already spontaneously formed by emigrant Methodists; one, the first on the circuit probably, at Anthony Davenport's, Deer Creek, on the west side of the Scioto. It had been organized by Tiffin, who was now effectively helping to found Methodism in the territory, as we have already seen, and who "preached regularly to the little society." "We had a powerful time," says Smith, "at our first meeting, and looked up for a revival of God's work, and an ingathering of precious souls." [22]

He went on laboring unceasingly over his long circuit, preaching twenty sermons every three weeks, and organizing small societies in almost every settlement, for he found emigrant Methodists nearly everywhere. The first quarterly meeting of the circuit was held in March, 1800. "We had," he says, "no elder to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but the great Head of the Church deigned to be with us, and blessed us indeed. Many tears were shed, and some thought they never were to such a meet-

[22] Meth. Mag., 1821, p. 271.

ing before. We had twelve classes, and eight or nine local preachers, and some exhorters. I was reappointed to the circuit, and returned in June, 1800. No preacher was sent to the Miami Circuit that year, so I was alone in that wilderness, as it was then, for about eighteen months, and withal I was much afflicted, and not able to do much. Our first quarterly meeting (for Scioto Circuit) for this year began at Moore's Meeting-house, on Scioto Brush Creek, on the 27th of September. I believe this was the first Methodist meeting-house that was built on that side of the Ohio River. We had no presiding elder present; but the Lord was with us of a truth, and condescended to manifest himself to us in the house that we had built for his worship. Our next quarterly meeting was at Pee-pee, on the 27th and 28th of December, and the Lord made it plain to us that he does not despise the day of small things, for he deigned to meet with us in our cabin on the banks of Scioto, and we had a very refreshing season indeed; yea, in the presence of the great Head of the Church, and the enjoyment of his love, we were as happy as if we sat among the thousands of Israel in some magnificent building. Miami Circuit was then in a woeful situation, and so continued until autumn, 1802, when Elisha Bowman was sent there. That year things took a favorable turn, and a great and glorious change was soon visible. I dragged on through great difficulties and much affliction, and ended my labors at the quarterly meeting on Scioto Brush Creek, on the 29th and 30th of August, 1801, and returned to Kentucky on the first day of September following, having spent near two years in the territory northwest of the Ohio." He organized Methodism at Chilicothe, July 7, 1800, after preaching there under the trees. The first

society consisted of eighteen members. Tiffin, though residing at Chilicothe, still remained a member at Davenport's, where he preached regularly.

Meanwhile an important acquisition was made by the struggling society in the arrival, on the scene, of one of our earliest and most interesting heroes. Philip Gatch emigrated, with his family, to the Miami region, and appeared there but a few months after the coming of Kobler. He was born, as we have noticed,[23] in the same year, and began to preach as early as William Watters, who worthily ranks as the first native Methodist preacher of the United States, having anticipated Gatch a short time on the records of the Conference. But Gatch was more conspicuous than Watters for his sufferings and activity in the early history of the denomination. We have seen him, after his marriage, locate, but continue his labors, in Virginia. In October, 1798, he started for the West. "My mind," he writes, "had dwelt on the subject; still I could not relinquish the enterprise. I viewed the evils of slavery at present as great, and apprehended more serious results in the future, if some effectual remedy should not be applied. Before setting out I met with a large assembly of my neighbors and acquaintances, and discoursed to them on Acts xx, 25. We reciprocated warm feelings, and shed many tears on the occasion. On the 11th of October my brother-in-law, Rev. James Smith, my friend Ambrose Ransom, and myself, with our families, set out."[24] He was now a neighbor of, and a co-worker with M'Cormick, and his home became a "preaching place" and a shelter for the itinerants. Most of his children were here gathered into the Church. Kobler, who had known him in the East, was delighted to meet

[23] Vol. i, p. 189. [24] Judge M'Lean's Life of Gatch, p. 95.

him. In his Memoirs, Kobler is described as "tall and well proportioned; his hair black and long, extending over the cape of his coat; his dress neat, with a straight breasted coat, and in every respect such as became a Methodist preacher of that day. He had a most impressive countenance. It showed no ordinary intellectual development, united with sweetness of disposition, unconquerable firmness, and uncommon devotion. His manner was very deliberate at the commencement of his discourse, but as he advanced he became more animated, and his words more powerful." While the Miami Circuit was without a preacher, as noticed in the extracts from Smith, Gatch labored hard to supply it, and "a great revival," he says, "took place in our settlement." And now, for the remainder of his life, he was a representative man of his Church in Ohio, preaching often, and promoting zealously its rising interests. He was made a magistrate, was a delegate to the convention which formed the Constitution of the state, and was appointed by the legislature an Associate Judge. He became a most influential citizen, a patriarch of the commonwealth as well as of the Church. Asbury, Whatcoat, and M'Kendree were often his guests, and his old eastern fellow-laborers, Watters, Dromgoole, and others, cheered him with letters. For twenty-two years his position, on the bench of the Court of Common Pleas, reflected honor on the public justice. His friend and fellow-preacher, Judge Scott, who, as we have seen, attained the honor of the Supreme Court, says he was "regarded as a man of inestimable worth." His connection with the early history of the Church rendered his old age venerable, and the Ohio Conference placed his name among its superannuated preachers, that he might die with it on their record. After invaluable

services to his Church and country, he preached his last sermon on the day in which he was eighty-four years old, and died the next year (1835) "in great peace and unshaken confidence in Christ."[25] His old friend, Kobler, revisited the country six years after his death. "Taking my hand," writes a son of Gatch, "he held it for some time in silence, looking me in the face with a most impressive expression of countenance, which produced in me a sensation that I shall not attempt to describe. At length, in the most emphatic manner, he said, 'Your father was a great man in his day. He fought many hard battles for the Church. May you be a worthy son of so worthy a father!' He visited the graves of my parents, took off his hat, and stood some minutes as if absorbed in deep thought; fell upon his knees for some time, arose bathed in tears, and walked out of the graveyard in silence." He was burdened with great memories, for the two veterans had shared in events which history, ages to come, may commemorate. Henry Smith, with whom we have journeyed so much in these western regions, says of him, "He preached extensively and successfully, and did much toward establishing and extending Methodism in that country, and giving it a proper tone. We all looked up to him as a patriarch, a counselor, and waymark. In a word, he was a prince in our Zion."

M'Cormick, Gatch, Tiffin, Scott, laymen and local preachers, with not a few others of like spirit, gave a character and impulse to Methodism in Ohio, to which must be ascribed much of its subsequent power over all the old Northwestern Territory. M'Cormick lived and died in a manner worthy of his historical position. In advanced life (1821) he wrote, "I am now grown old, and what can I say respecting Methodism? I believe

[25] Minutes, 1836.

its plan is of divine origin, and millions with me will have cause to thank and adore the Lord through eternity for it, and for the whole of Methodism. I do not believe there ever was such a set of men since the apostolic day for zeal, fortitude, and usefulness in bringing sinners to the knowledge of themselves and of Christ as our traveling preachers. My journey through life will soon be brought to a close. I have no other plea to make 'but that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'"[26] In the latter part of his life he was absolved from active service by maladies which were the effects of the exposures and fatigues of his early preaching, but "the evening of his days was cloudless." He died in 1836, and his last words were "Glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life!"[27]

John Sale, from whom we have recently parted, was sent to the Scioto Circuit in 1803. The next year he was appointed, says his biographer, to Miami Circuit. These two circuits then embraced all the south and west portions of the state of Ohio. It was while traveling this circuit that he organized the first society of Methodists in Cincinnati. The Conference which had been held at Mount Gerizim, Ky., the preceding year, organized the Ohio District, the first in the state, and appointed Burke presiding elder. We may get some idea of the extent of its fields of labor, and the manner in which they were supplied, from the list of appointments: Muskingum and Little Kanawha, George Askins; Hockhocking, James Quinn, John Meek; Scioto, William Patterson, Nathan Barnes; Miami, John Sale, J. Oglesby, Guyandotte, Asa Shinn. When we remember the sparseness of the population, the distance between the appointments without roads, rivers to be crossed without bridges,

[26] Meth. Mag., 1822, p. 315. [27] Ladies' Repository, March, 1860.

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it must be obvious, says a contemporary Methodist, that none but such as felt a necessity laid upon them to preach the gospel would be likely to engage in such a work.[28] From the same authority we learn, more particularly, the organization of the Church in Cincinnati by Sale. Several preachers had been there before. Kobler had visited it in 1798; he describes it as "an old garrison, (Fort Washington,) a declining, time-stricken, God-forsaken place." He wished to preach, but "could find no opening or reception of any kind whatever." Lewis Hunt and Elisha Bowman occasionally ventured into the demoralized place, and preached without result. In 1804 John Collins, who had come the year before to the territory, but was not yet in the itinerancy, went to it to purchase provisions. He inquired of a storekeeper, "Is there any Methodist here?" "Yes, sir," was the reply; "I am a Methodist." The local preacher was taken by surprise at the joyful intelligence, and, throwing his arms around the layman's neck, he wept. He eagerly inquired if there were any more Methodists in the place. The response was equally cheering: "O yes, brother, there are several." The heart of Collins leaped for joy. "O," said the zealous young preacher, "that I could have them altogether!" "In this you shall be gratified, my brother," rejoined the layman; "I will open my house, and call together the people, if you will preach." The upper room of Carter, the merchant's house was fitted up with temporary benches, while every effort possible was made to give the appointment an extensive circulation. Only twelve persons attended, but "it was a memorable time for Methodism in Cincinnati. It was the planting of a handful of corn on the tops of the mountains, the increasing and ever multiplying products of which were to shake with the fruitage

[28] Finley's Sketches, p. 87.

of Lebanon." The next sermon to this infant Church was by Sale in a house in Main-street, between First and Second-streets. The congregation was increased to thirty or forty persons. After preaching, a proposition was made to organize a society in the usual way, according to the Discipline of the Church. A chapter was read from the Bible; then followed singing, prayer, and the reading of the General Rules of the society. All, then, who felt desirous of becoming members of the society, and were willing to abide by the General Rules, came forward and gave in their names. The number was only eight, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Carter, their son and daughter; Mr. and Mrs. Gibson, and Mr. and Mrs. St. Clair. Mr. Gibson was appointed the leader. A Church being organized, arrangements were made to have preaching regularly every two weeks by the circuit evangelists. The society received an accession in the ensuing spring by the arrival in town of two Methodist families; namely, those of Messrs. Richardson and Lyons, and subsequently by the arrival of Messrs. Nelson and Hall, and their families. This little band of Christians were closely attached to each other, and were one in sentiment and action. Meetings were held in the old log school-house below the hill, not far from the fort. The location of this school-house was such as to accommodate the villagers; and as its site was near the intersection of Lawrence and Congress streets, it is presumed that this portion of the town was the most thickly inhabited. In 1805 the small society began to build their first church, the "Old Stone Chapel." Such was the humble origin of Methodism in Cincinnati.

We have already had occasion to note that it was, during these times, invading Ohio from the East as

well as from the South. Robert Manly, as early as 1799, formed a circuit reaching from the Ohio River up the Muskingum some forty miles, organized the first society in Marietta, and left some ten or twelve classes on the circuit.[29] Jesse Stoneman followed him, and so enlarged the field, that Quinn was sent by Hitt in the fall to assist him; the townships on Hockhocking were comprehended in it, and many societies were formed, and a host of preachers, local and itinerant, raised up. Asa Shinn organized a large four weeks' circuit on Hockhocking in 1803, with some fifteen societies, and Quinn was there again in 1804. Thence Methodism kept pace with the settlements extending back on the tributaries of the stream, and to Lake Erie, giving rise to scores of circuits.

Meanwhile, from the home of Roberts, in the Chenango and Erie regions, the itinerants made their way across the line, and Deerfield, in Portage County, is reported in the Minutes of 1803, with Shadrach Bostwick as its "missionary." Henry Shewel, a local preacher from Virginia, had preceded him, as we have recorded, and as early as 1801 a small society had spontaneously organized in Deerfield. Bostwick was pre-eminent among the men of that day, a native of Maryland, who joined the itinerancy in 1791, and after traveling in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York, entered New England in 1797, and presided over some of its districts with great success down to 1803, when, like Beauchamp in Western Virginia, he surprises us by his sudden appearance here in the northwest of Ohio. He had thus penetrated the old "Western Reserve," and was the

[29] It appears not improbable that Manly crossed the line from Pennsylvania or Virginia, and occasionally preached in Ohio, as early as 1795.

first Methodist preacher sent into that region, and formed the circuit. It extended among the sparse villages, and required extraordinary labors and sacrifices. He traveled on the Indian trails and by marks on the trees. The roads were so bad in winter, and the bridges so few, that he had to desist from traveling for several months during the worst weather. He formed the first Methodist societies in that flourishing country, and the results of his labors during this and the following year have continued to multiply to the present time, "keeping an even pace with the progress of the settlements, and the improvement of society."[30] He located, on account of domestic necessities, in 1805, and resumed the practice of medicine, to which he had been educated. "Shadrach Bostwick," says one of his old friends and fellow-laborers, "was a glorious man."[31] He was a remarkable preacher, famous through all the extensive regions of his labors for the intellectual and evangelical power of his sermons. His talents would have secured him eminence in any department of public life. His discourses were systematic, profound, luminous, and frequently overpowering, his piety deep and pure, his manners dignified and cordial.

Methodism was then fully on its march into the Northwestern Territory, at nearly every accessible point, by the close of our present period. It had not only invaded Ohio, but reached hopefully beyond it. As early as 1802[32] Methodist preachers ventured within the present limits of Indiana, which then had but a few scattered settlers. Its first Methodist was Nathan Robertson,

[30] Bangs's Hist of Meth., vol. ii, p. 80.

[31] Bishop Hedding to the author.

[32] Rev. Dr. Aaron Wood's Annals of Meth. Epis. Ch. in Indiana, p. 3. Indianapolis, 1854.

who moved from Kentucky to Charleston in 1799; three years later a small class was organized at Gassaway, near Charleston, in Clark County.[33] The first chapel of the denomination, in the state, still stands about two miles from Charleston; it was made of hewed logs, "and is in a good state of preservation, though not used for worship."[34] By 1807 we shall find in the state one circuit, with one preacher and sixty-seven members; and by 1810, three circuits, four preachers, and seven hundred and sixty members, the beginning of that great host, now a hundred thousand strong, led by four hundred itinerants.

Before the close of our period, Benjamin Young, brother of Jacob Young, was dispatched (1804) as a missionary to Illinois, which had but about two hundred and fifteen inhabitants in 1800, and was not admitted as a state of the Union till fourteen years after Young's appointment. We have some glimpses of the pioneer's trials in a letter from him, dated Indiana Territory, Randolph County, June 1, 1804, in which he says: "I am and have been very sickly since I have been here, but I hope I am on the mend. . . . As for the state of religion, it is bad. I have formed a circuit, and five classes of fifty members. In some places there is a revival. About twenty have professed to be converted since I came, but the bulk of the people are given up to wickedness of every kind. Of all places it is the worst for stealing, fighting, and lying. My soul, come not into their secret places! I met with great difficulties in coming to this country. I lost my horse in the wilderness, fifty miles from any settlement, and had to walk in and hire a horse to go and find mine.

[33] Rev. Dr. Bowman's Centenary Sermon.

[34] Rev. G. L. Curtis, in Christ. Adv. New York, Oct. 11, 1866.

The Kickapoo Indians had stolen him, and Mr. Reed's, who was with me, but we got them with cost and trouble. When I got to Kaskaskia I preached there, but they made me pay two dollars for the room, and twenty shillings for two days' board. I ran out of money, and had to sell my books. At last the people began to help me; but I thank God I can make out, though I have suffered with cold. Last winter my clothes were thin and worn out, and I had no money to buy more. But I trust I am in the way to heaven, and I know my heart is engaged in the work of God. . . As I do not expect to come to Conference, I may not see you again in this life, but I hope to meet you in a better world."[35] In the first year he returned sixty-seven Church members from its sparse population.

Methodism had already attempted to erect its standard as far North as Michigan. In 1803 a local preacher by the name of Freeman found his way far into the country, and preached at Detroit, where he left at least one awakened soul who welcomed his successors. In 1804 Nathan Bangs passed over from Canada and sounded the alarm in Detroit, though without apparent success; the place, woefully depraved with a conglomerate population of Indians, French, and immigrants, was subsequently invaded again, from Canada, by William Case, and soon after an Irish local preacher, William Mitchell, organized the first Methodist society in the city, the first in the state. Methodism was never again totally dislodged from Michigan, though its progress was slow, and no Protestant Church of any denomination was erected within its bounds till 1818.[36]

Asbury made five expeditions to the West in these

[35] MS. letter in possession of Rev. F. S. De Hass, Washington City.
[36] Rev. E. H. Pilcher, in Northwest. Adv., Sept. 5, 1866.

eight years, though his health was more enfeebled, during most of this period, than in any other portion of his public life. It broke down on his first trip in 1797, and he was compelled to return before completing his tour; but he had scaled the Alleghanies from North Carolina. By the twenty-fourth of March he was in the thickest difficulties of the mountains. "Hard necessity," he says, "made us move forward. The western branch of Toe River, that comes down from the Yellow Mountain, was rapidly filling, and was rocky, rolling, and roaring like the sea, yet we were compelled to cross it several times. When we came to ascend the mountain we had a skirmish of rain, thunder, and lightning; it was distant; it was mercy. I found hard work to ride where Thomas White had driven his wagon, for which he deserves a place in my journal, and a premium from the state. When we had ascended the summit of the mountain we found it so rich and miry, that it was with great difficulty we could ride along; but I was wrapped up in heavy, wet garments, and unable to walk through weakness of body, so we had it, pitch, slide, and drive to the bottom. We then came upon the drains and branches of Great Toe River. From Fisher's we had to ride through what I called the 'shades of death,' four miles to Miller's. Here we had to cope with Toe River, and near the house came into deep water. My horse drove to the opposite bank above the landing, and locked one of his feet in a root, or something like it, but freed himself. At last we made the house. The people received us kindly, and gave us such things as they had. We could only partially dry our garments. We heard heavy tidings of a deep rocky ford yet to be passed in our way across Toe River."

On the next day his anticipations were verified.

"Three brave young Dutchmen" escorted him. They had to break their way through woods and ravines to escape dangerous fords, and on the following day he writes, "I was met by our brethren, Kobler, Burke, and Page. I rested on Monday and Tuesday to take breath and medicine. I find myself so hardly put to it at times that I can only journalize a little. We concluded, as there are not proper stations on the Cumberland path, it will not do for me to lodge on the ground; the general opinion is against it. We are to try to go to Kentucky next week."

He was now suffering terribly from intermittent fever, the attacks of which sometimes lasted thirty hours. It had become almost chronic, for he had not rested enough at any one place to subdue it. Some of the preachers met him in Tennessee, and, valuing his life more than their own local advantage from his visit, insisted upon his immediate return to the East as his only safety. He saw that he "must give up the cause," and "make the best of his way to Baltimore." "Live or die," he writes on the 29th, "I must ride. After all the disappointments, perhaps every purpose is answered but one. I have sent Brother Kobler to take charge of Kentucky and Cumberland, by visiting the whole every quarter. Brother Bird I have stationed in the Holston District. I have written a circumstantial letter to Brother Poythress and the Kentucky Conference. I have made a plan for the stationing of the preachers, at least those of any standing, and now I will make the best of my way to Baltimore."

The backward journey was severe, for, besides his ill health, he had sometimes to ride "thirty miles to get to a house." "I must," he says, "be made perfect through sufferings." He took refuge at last in a "retreat" near

Baltimore, but in a few weeks he was abroad on his usual northward route. In the latter part of the year, however, he was compelled, as we have seen, to lay by in Virginia, and give his work chiefly into the hands of Lee.

In September, 1800, he was again on his way westward, with Whatcoat and M'Kendree, for the purpose of introducing the latter as chief of the great field. We have already briefly glanced at their expedition. By the first of October they were in Kentucky, and on the fourth were at Bethel, the site of Poythress's academy, where they held the Western Conference. Whatcoat and M'Kendree, he says, "preached. I was so dejected I could say little, but weep. Sabbath day it rained, and I kept at home. Here is Bethel. Cokesbury in miniature, eighty by thirty feet, three stories, with a high roof, and finished below. Now we want a fund and an income of three hundred per year to carry it on, without which it will be useless. But it is too distant from public places. Its being surrounded by the river Kentucky in part, we now find to be no benefit; thus all our excellences are turned into defects. Perhaps Brother Poythress and myself were as much overseen with this place as Dr. Coke was with the seat of Cokesbury. But all is right that works right, and all is wrong that works wrong, and we must be blamed by men of slender sense for consequences impossible to foresee—for other people's misconduct. Sabbath day, Monday, and Tuesday, we were shut up in Bethel with the traveling and local ministry and the trustees that could be called together. We ordained fourteen or fifteen local and traveling deacons. It was thought expedient to carry the first design of education into execution, and that we should employ a man of sterling qualifications, to be

chosen by and under the direction of a select number of trustees and others, who should obligate themselves to see him paid, and take the profits, if any, arising from the establishment."

Besides Asbury's companions, the only preachers at the Conference were Burke, Sale, Harriman, and Lakin. Its journal covers not a page of cap paper.[37] After the session, still accompanied by Whatcoat and M'Kendree, Asbury made his way, through formidable difficulties, to Cumberland. By the nineteenth they were at Nashville, Tenn., where he reports a congregation of a thousand people, in a "stone church, which, if floored, ceiled, and glazed, would be a grand house." On the twentieth they reached the scene of the camp-meetings, then just begun by the Magee's and their Presbyterian associates. All three of the travelers preached, with extraordinary interest, amid these novel circumstances, near Drake's Creek Meeting-house. Two thousand people were present on Sunday. Asbury has left us a brief picture of these first meetings of the kind. On the 21st he says: "Yesterday, and especially during the night, were witnessed scenes of deep interest. In the intervals between preaching the people refreshed themselves and horses, and returned upon the ground. The stand was in the open air, embosomed in a wood of lofty beech trees. The ministers of God, Methodists and Presbyterians, united their labors, and mingled with the child-like simplicity of primitive times. Fires blazing here and there dispelled the darkness, and the shouts of the redeemed captives, and the cries of precious souls struggling into life, broke the silence of midnight. The weather was delightful, as if heaven smiled, while mercy flowed in abundant streams of salvation to perishing

[37] Rev. Dr. Trimble's Address at Ohio Wesleyan University, 1860

sinners. We suppose there were at least thirty souls converted at this meeting. I rejoice that God is visiting the sons of the Puritans, who are candid enough to acknowledge their obligations to the Methodists."

He turned his face eastward again. On his way toward Knoxville he writes: "Here let me record the gracious dealings of God to my soul in this journey: I have had uncommon peace of mind and spiritual consolations every day, notwithstanding the long rides I have endured, and the frequent privations of good water and proper food to which I have been subjected. To me the wilderness and the solitary places were made as the garden of God, and as the presence-chambers of the King of kings and Lord of lords."

The journey among the mountains of East Tennessee was, however, to try his utmost patience. The roads were bad, his horse and chaise were upset, the latter turned bottom upward, and only saved from being precipitated down the steep rocks by the obstructing trees; the clothing and furniture of emigrants were spread on the route from their wagons, which had met with similar accidents. Asbury had but lately taken to a vehicle. He now writes: "We must bid farewell to the chaise; this mode of conveyance by no means suits the roads of this wilderness; we are obliged to keep one behind the carriage, with a strap to hold by and prevent accidents, almost continually. I have health and hard labor, and a constant sense of the favor of God." On the fourteenth of November he was safe in North Carolina, at "the foot of the grand mountain division of South Carolina." He had traveled in this western excursion a thousand miles in less than two months.

On the 15th of September, 1801, he was again climbing the Alleghanies, accompanied by Nicholas Snethen.

When they arrived at the comfortable shelter of the late General Russell's mansion, Asbury wrote: "I have a partial restoration of health; but the fever returns every morning, added to which, the severe and constant riding, with want, and generally irregularity, of meals, becomes in a great degree a cause of sickness. I was pleased to see our local brethren come forty and fifty miles to visit me. We met with joy, and parted in tears." By the thirtieth he was holding a Conference at Ebenezer in Tennessee. "Our brethren in Kentucky," he says, "did not attend; they pleaded the greatness of the work of God. Twelve of us sat in Conference three days, and we had not an unpleasant countenance, nor did we hear an angry word; and why should it not always be thus? Are we not the ministers of the meek and lowly, the humble and holy Jesus? N. Snethen gave us two sermons. We ordained on Friday, Saturday, and Sabbath day, and upon each day I improved a little on the duties of ministers. On the Lord's day we assembled in the woods, and made a large congregation. My subject was Isa. lxii, 1. On Friday and Saturday evenings, and on Sabbath morning, there was the noise of praise and shouting in the meeting-house. It is thought there are twenty-five souls who have found the Lord; they are chiefly the children of Methodists, the children of faith and of many prayers. Monday, October 5, we parted in great love. Our company made twelve miles to Isaiah Harrison's, and next day reached the Warm Springs upon French Broad River."

He and Snethen spent about two weeks more, west of the mountains, traveling, and preaching in cabins and under trees; but we have only brief notes of their progress. They made their way back to South Carolina,

and hastened south, north, and east as usual. In the midsummer of 1802 the bishop, with Snethen, was again approaching the mountains, and writing, "My mind is freely staid upon God, my guide in life and death." By the tenth of September he says: "We came upon Holston. I found the people praising God. A blessed revival had taken place. Fourteen or fifteen times have I toiled over the mighty mountains, and nearly twenty years have we labored upon Holston; and lo, the rage of wild and Christian savages is tamed, and God hath glorified himself. Sweet peace fills my mind, and glorious prospects of Zion's prosperity cheer my heart. We have not, shall not, labor in vain. Not unto us, not unto us, but to Jehovah be all the glory on earth, and in heaven forever!"

He went preaching through Tennessee till the second of October, when he opened the Conference at Bethel, Cumberland. William Hodge and William Magee, Presbyterian ministers of camp-meeting fame, were present, and preached with "great fervency." Thirteen members attended. It was at this session that they disposed of the sad case of their old chieftain, Poythress, and received Jacob Young, Ralph Lotspeich, Jesse Walker, James Gwinn, Leven Edney, and William Crutchfield, some of them still remembered as eminent evangelists.[38] After laboring nearly two weeks longer in Tennessee the bishop returned through his usual western trials. On the eighteenth he writes: "We continued on until half past six o'clock, then stopped, struck a fire, and encamped under a heavy mountain dew, which, when the wind shook the trees, fell like rain upon us. Brother M'Kendree made me a tent of his own and John Watson's blankets, and happily saved me from taking cold

[38] Bishop Morris, in West. Christ. Adv., Jan. 8, 1851.

while I slept about two hours under my grand *marquee*. Brother M'Kendree threw his cloak over the limb of a tree, and he and his companion took shelter underneath, and slept also. I will not be rash, I dare not be rash in my protestations against any country; but I think I will never more brave the wilderness without a tent. On Tuesday, after riding fifty miles, a part of ninety-three miles in two days, we came about eight o'clock to West Point."

Several times during this journey the horses of the bishop and his traveling companion had perilous falls upon the difficult paths. By one of them Snethen was so injured that he had to be "left, lame, upon the road." Asbury could stop for no man; yet, while hastening on, he was himself desperately ill. He writes: "I have been sick for twenty-three days. Ah, the tale of woe I might relate! My dear M'Kendree had to lift me up and down from my horse like a helpless child. For my sickness and sufferings I conceive I am indebted to sleeping uncovered in the wilderness. I could not have slept but for the aid of laudanum. Meantime my spirits and patience were wonderfully preserved in general, although I was sometimes hardly restrained from crying, 'Lord, let me die!' for death hath no terrors, and I could not but reflect upon my escape from the toil and sufferings of another year. I had no sad forebodings of the ills which might befall the Church; it is the Lord's, not mine. Nor did I say to myself, What will become of wife and children? These I have not. But what am I to learn from these ills and aches? 'These are counselors that feelingly persuade me what I am.' I am no longer young; I cannot go out as at other times. I must take the advice of friends who say, 'Spare thyself.' I have ridden about five thousand five hundred miles;

and in the midst of all I am comforted with the prospects of the Western Conference. We have added three thousand members this year, have formed Cumberland into a district, and have sent a missionary to the Natchez." He reaches South Carolina again, having completed six thousand miles of travel in about a year and a quarter.

In August, 1803, we find him pushing westward of the Pennsylvania Alleghanies. He passed through the Redstone settlement, to "which he gave the preference over almost any in America" for its "good soil, lofty timber, iron and coal," and reached Pittsburgh, where he preached for the first time. Through Northwestern Virginia he penetrated into Ohio, his first visit there. On the 24th of September he was at Chilicothe, the guest of Governor Tiffin, and preached in the Courthouse. Before the month was ended he had passed into Kentucky, and on the first of October was preaching, with Barnabas M'Henry, at Mount Gerizim, near Cynthiana, where, on Sunday, he proclaimed his message in the woods to about two thousand people, and on the next day, the third, "we entered," he says, "fully upon our Conference work; but I had to preach nevertheless. We had preaching every day; and the people continued singing and prayer, night and day, with little intermission. On Wednesday the meeting closed. We hope there were twenty souls converted to God, besides five who are reported to have been converted at a family meeting. Our Conference ended on Thursday the 6th. I found my mind devoutly fixed on God. I accomplished two things in Conference: namely, 1. Formed the Ohio circuits into a district; 2. Sent two missionaries to Natchez, and one to the Illinois." We have had a transient view, the best we can now get,

of this session in Jacob Young's account of it. The bishop and Snethen hastened on through Kentucky and Tennessee. On reaching Claiborne Court-house, in the latter, after a desperate day's travel, he gives a fuller than usual detail of the life of the times in the West, and of his episcopal comforts and dignities there. "What a road have we passed!" he exclaims, "certainly the worst on the whole continent, even in the best weather; yet, bad as it was, there were four or five hundred crossing the rude hills while we were. I was powerfully struck with the consideration, that there were at least as many thousand emigrants annually from east to west: we must take care to send preachers after these people. We have made one thousand and eighty miles from Philadelphia; and now, what a detail of sufferings might I give, fatiguing to me to write, and perhaps to my friends to read! A man who is well mounted will scorn to complain of the roads, when he sees men, women, and children, almost naked, paddling bare-foot and bare-legged along, or laboring up the rocky hills, while those who are best off have only a horse for two or three children to ride at once. If these adventurers have little or nothing to eat, it is no extraordinary circumstance; and not uncommon to encamp in the wet woods after night—in the mountains it does not rain, but pours. I too have my sufferings, perhaps peculiar to myself: pain and temptation; the one of the body, and the other of the spirit; no room to retire to—that in which you sit common to all, crowded with women and children, the fire occupied by cooking, much and long-loved solitude not to be found, unless you choose to run into the rain in the woods: six months in the year I have had, for thirty-two years, occasionally, to submit to what will never be agreeable to me;

but the people, it must be confessed, are among the kindest souls in the world. Yet kindness will not make a crowded log-cabin, twelve feet by ten, agreeable: without are cold and rain; and within, six adults, and as many children, one of which is all motion; the dogs, too, must sometimes be admitted. On Saturday, at Felix Ernest's, I found that among my other trials I had taken the itch; and, considering the filthy houses and filthy beds I have met with, in coming from the Kentucky Conference, it is perhaps strange that I have not caught it twenty times: I do not see that there is any security against it, but by sleeping in a brimstone shirt—poor bishop! But we must bear it for the elect's sake. My soul is tranquil, the air is pure, and the house of God is near; and Jehovah is nearer."

As he hastened onward he passed two of the new "camp-grounds of the Methodists and Presbyterians;" they "made," he says, "the country look like the Holy Land." On reaching North Carolina he writes: "Once more I have escaped from filth, fleas, rattlesnakes, hills, mountains, rocks, and rivers: farewell, western world, for a while!" Asbury considered "cleanliness next to godliness;" in his habits of dress, manners, and all things, he was neat almost to precision; no one could be more at home than he in the opulent circles of Perry and Rembert Halls, the mansions of Russell, Bassett, and Lippett; but his preachers were suffering bravely the hardships of the frontier, and, if his presence was not absolutely necessary for their ecclesiastical affairs, still he willingly shared their trials for the moral advantage of his example. Under its influences some of the noblest men of the ministry plunged into these wildernesses to build up their Christian civilization. His example was hardly less import-

ant than his administrative ability in these early days of his Church.

There were, in 1804, nearly eleven thousand nine hundred (11,877) Methodists, and nearly fifty (46) preachers, reported in the Western Conference.[39] It comprised four districts and twenty-five circuits. These statistics do not include, however, all the growing societies of Western Pennsylvania and Western Virginia, which have been comprised in this survey of Western Methodism, for, in defining the West, I have regarded neither Conference nor state lines, but the natural geographical boundaries of the country. The Monongahela and Greenbrier Districts, taking in the Redstone and Greenbrier regions, had now nearly three thousand five hundred (3,438) Methodists and twenty-six preachers on fourteen circuits. These, added to the statistics of the Western Conference, would give the denomination, west of the Mountains, six districts, thirty-nine circuits, seventy two preachers, and more than fifteen thousand three hundred (15,315) members; an estimate which still leaves out many Methodists beyond the Blue Ridge. It shows, however, remarkable prosperity for a newly and sparsely settled country. The Church had now been planted in Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi, and Methodist itinerants were preaching the gospel from Pittsburgh to Natchez. Western Methodism had gained in these last eight years two districts, sixteen circuits, thirty-six preachers, and about eight thousand eight hundred members. It witnessed already the presage of its later unparalleled triumphs.

[39] See Minutes of 1805, which give the statistics of the Western Conference for 1804.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCES OF 1800 AND 1804.

Coke returns to America — Session of 1800 — Ordination of Whatcoat — Accounts of the Conference — Lee — Coke — Asbury — "Allowance" to Preachers — Other Provisions — Anticipatory Measures — Richard Allen, the first African ordained in the Church — Antislavery Enactments — William Ormond against Slavery — Leading Members follow his Example — Additions to the Law of the Church on the Subject — Religious Excitement — Catherine Bruff (Catherine Ennalls) — Coke revisits the United States — General Conference of 1804 — Its Members — Unequal Representation — Necessity of a Delegated General Conference — Revision and Changes of the Discipline — Important Declaration on the National Sovereignty — Slavery again Discussed — The Adjournment.

Two more General Conferences pertain to our present period, the sessions of 1800 and 1804.

Coke, since his last departure from America, in 1797, had been laboring, with his usual energy, in Scotland, Ireland, and England. Asbury and the Virginia Conference had remitted, as far as they were able, the obligation of his pledge to serve the American Church. The English, and especially the Irish, Conferences entreated for a continued share in his labors. "They saw in him," says their historian, "the spirit of missionary enterprise combined with a perfect knowledge of the details of the work, together with a quenchless zeal, which was altogether marvelous. They clearly perceived that the Methodism of England needed such a man, and sought to reclaim him."[1] They now sent with him, to America, letters praying for the repeal of

[1] Smith's "History of Methodism," ii, 306.

his pledge. It was his eighth voyage to the new world. His journals of the visit are lost; we only know that he made his customary inspection of the West India Missions, and arrived at Baltimore in time for the session of the Conference.

It began on Tuesday, May 6, 1800.[2] Its published journals give no roll of its members, and the briefest possible outline of its proceedings; but, happily, a spectator of the occasion has recorded some account of it. He says: "The General Conference of 1800 was one of the most remarkable in the history of our Church. The revival at that time was the greatest that has ever occurred during the session of any General Conference. I was a visitor, and had peculiar opportunities to witness the wonderful scenes that created joy on earth and in heaven. All the accounts we have had are extremely meager. As I have been preserved, while all who were actors in those scenes are gone, I will describe what I heard and saw at that time. It is not generally known that the greatest displays of divine power, and the most numerous conversions, were in private houses, in prayer-meetings. And yet the preaching was highly honored of God, for the ministers were endued with power from on high. I kept in my journal a particular account of their texts and themes. The General Conference commenced its session on Tuesday, May 6, in Light-street, Baltimore. All the General Conferences, from the famous Christmas Conference to the first delegated Conference, were held in Baltimore. Baltimore was a small place to what it is now. We then called it Baltimore town. The Methodists had two church edifices, one in Light-street, the other in Oldtown, which was in the suburbs. This was the first time I had ever seen

[2] Journals of the Gen. Conf. of the M. E. Church, vol. i, p. 31.

a body of Methodist preachers; only now and then one wended his way to my father's neighborhood. The Conference was then composed of all the traveling elders. The strong men of Methodism were there, and such a noble class of men I had never beheld. There were Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, George Roberts, John Bloodgood, William P. Chandler, John M'Claskey, Ezekiel Cooper, Nicholas Snethen, Thomas Morrell, Joseph Totten, Lawrence M'Combs, Thomas F. Sargent, William Burke, William M'Kendree, and others. These were representative men, who laid the broad foundations of Methodism east, west, north, and south. What a privilege to hear them debate, and listen to their sermons! Such was the health of Bishop Asbury that he thought of resigning; but the Conference, in order to relieve him, authorized him to take an elder as a traveling companion. They elected Richard Whatcoat bishop, he having a majority of four votes over Jesse Lee. I witnessed the excitement attending the different ballotings. The first, no election; the second, a tie; the third, Richard Whatcoat was elected."[3]

The same authority gives a momentary view of the ordination Sabbath. "Sunday, the 18th, was a great day in Baltimore among the Methodists. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Thomas Coke, LL D., in Light-street Church. Crowds at an early hour thronged the temple. The doctor preached from Rev. ii, 8: 'And unto the angel of the church at Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive,' etc. After the sermon, which was adapted to the occasion, Richard Whatcoat was ordained a bishop in the Church of God by the imposition

[3] Boehm's "Reminiscences," p. 35.

of the hands of Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, assisted by several elders. Never were holy hands laid upon a holier head. In those days we went 'out into the highways and hedges and compelled them to come in. That afternoon Jesse Lee preached in the market-house on Howard's Hill, from John xvii, 3: 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.' The Lord was there in a powerful manner. Several were converted."

Asbury records a single paragraph of but fifteen lines respecting the session. "Two days," he says, "were spent in considering about Dr. Coke's return to Europe, part of two days on Richard Whatcoat for a bishop, and one day in raising the salary of the itinerant preachers from sixty-four to eighty dollars per year. We had one hundred and sixteen members present. The unction that attended the word was great; more than one hundred souls, at different times and places, professed conversion during the Conference. I was weary, but sat very close in Conference. My health is better than when we began." Whatcoat writes but nine lines about it. He says: "We had a most blessed time and much preaching, fervent prayers, and strong exhortations through the city, while the high praises of our gracious God reverberated from street to street, and from house to house, which greatly alarmed the citizens. It was thought that not less than two hundred were converted during the sitting of our Conference."[4]

Lee writes, that "such a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord has not been felt in that town for some years."[5] He seems to have suffered little from his defeat in the episcopal election, for he was mean-

[4] Memoir, p. 30.

[5] Lee's History, p. 271.

while as active as ever in the stirring scenes around him, preaching with great power in the churches and the streets. In reviewing the occasion he says, "I believe we never had so good a General Conference before. We had the greatest speaking and the greatest union of affections that we ever had on a like occasion." [6]

Boehm says: "During this Conference I became acquainted with many choice spirits, both among the ministry and laity; among the rest Dr. Thomas Coke. I not only had the pleasure of hearing the doctor preach and make motions and speeches in the Conference, but also of dining with him and Bishop Asbury. The doctor was a short man, and rather corpulent. He had a beautiful face, and it was full of expression, a sweet smile often playing over his features. His eyes were dark, and his look very piercing. His voice was soft and full of melody, unless raised to a very high pitch, and then it was harsh, discordant, and squeaking. His conversational powers were great. He was very entertaining. He did a noble work for American Methodism, and should ever be remembered with the liveliest sentiments of gratitude. He sleeps in the Indian Ocean, 'till the sea give up its dead.'"

Nicholas Snethen was elected secretary. Asbury, worn out by labor and disease, had designed to resign his office; but the Conference could not think of so serious a revolution in their affairs, for such would certainly have been the loss of Asbury's episcopal services. They not only unanimously voted him their thanks, and "entreated" him to continue the "superintendency" as "far

[6] Lee's Life of Lee, p. 380. His biographer, however, supposes he "felt severely" his treatment by some of the preachers, especially by Lyell, an influential member, who afterward became a Protestan Episcopal clergyman in New York. P. 378.

as his strength would permit," but, besides electing Whatcoat as his coadjutor, authorized him to select a "traveling companion" from the ministry, a relief which was continued during his remaining life. They also so far conceded to the prayer of the British and Irish Conferences for the services of Coke as to allow of his return to them, on condition that "he come back to America as soon as his business will allow, but certainly by the next General Conference." They were two days debating this subject. "We have lent the doctor to you," they wrote, "for a season."

The "allowance" of sixty-four dollars per year, besides traveling expenses, to the preachers, was now found entirely inadequate to their support, as prices had advanced nearly fifty per cent. on almost "every article of their consumption;" they were therefore allowed eighty dollars, their wives or widows the same amount, and each child, under seven years old, sixteen dollars, each over seven, and under fourteen, twenty-four. Their children over fourteen had no allowance. These pittances were the "salaries" of Methodist preachers and their families down to the year 1816, when the sum was raised to one hundred dollars a year, except for children, to whom the old rule still applied. The provision of furnished parsonages was urgently recommended, and some other financial arrangements devised, particularly the "Preachers' Fund," for the relief of the suffering ministry. They repealed the rule requiring a report of all donations given by their friends. They enacted that each Annual Conference should raise its proportion of the expenses of the bishops, which had hitherto been met, quite casually, by private donations and occasional collections in particular churches.

The whole Church was now divided into seven An

nual Conferences. These bodies were required to keep journals, and submit them to the examination of the General Conference. It was enacted that no preacher should be a member of the latter who had not traveled four years, and been received into full membership. The power of the preacher over accused members of the Church was amended, so that the members trying the accused were to pronounce him guilty or innocent according to the evidence, the preacher retaining the right to pronounce sentence, and also, if he dissented from the committee, to appeal the case to the Quarterly Conference. Ezekiel Cooper was elected Book Agent.

There are some significant indications in the proceedings of this session which have hitherto been unnoticed by the historians of the Church. On the second day a motion was introduced to authorize the Annual Conferences to elect their own presiding elders. It was defeated, but was the beginning of a controversy which, prevailed for years in the Conference, and throughout the Church. It was attempted also to make local preachers eligible to ordination as elders. The motion was adopted, but reconsidered and "withdrawn." William Ormond, who appears to have been the noblest "radical" of the body,[7] tried it

[7] He died before the next General Conference. His brethren say of him: "A native of North Carolina, of a respectable family, and his circumstances in life sufficient, with care and improvement, to have afforded him ample support. He was affectionate, fervent, and faithful, gracious, and gifted. He had a high sense of the rights of men. He labored and traveled extensively from Maryland, in various circuits in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and even to Georgia. He died happy in God, declaring with his latest breath, his soul enjoyed peace, peace, victory, victory, complete victory. He has left a legacy to the Conference, and another to build a house for God in the neighborhood of his nativity. So lived and so died William Ormond. He fell a martyr to his work during the yellow fever in Norfolk in 1803."—*Minutes of* 1804.

again, but failed. A motion to reorganize the General Conference, as a delegated body, was defeated by "a great majority;" but was an anticipation of a coming change. Coke attempted, without success, to obtain a rule by which the new bishop, in the absence of Asbury, should be required to read his appointments of preachers in the Annual Conferences, "to hear what the Conference may have to say on each station," in accordance with the English example. Joshua Wells was defeated in a motion to provide a committee of three or four elders, to be chosen by each Annual Conference, to aid the new bishop in making the appointments, an anticipation of a later function of the presiding elders. The motion was twice repeated by other members, but was negatived. These good men were fearful of innovations which have since become indispensable and most salutary in the Methodist system.

A rule was recorded allowing the bishops to ordain "local deacons of our African brethren in places where they have built a house for the worship of God." Nine years later, Lee says that this concession was but "little known," and had never been published, owing to Southern opposition. Richard Allen, of Philadelphia, (afterward Bishop Allen,) was thus ordained on the 11th of June, 1799, the first colored preacher ever ordained by the Methodist Episcopal Church. But the most striking feature of the journals of this session (unnoticed by the Church historians) is the persistent antislavery interest of many of the most eminent men in the Conference.[8] We have seen that ever since the Annual Conference of 1780 the subject had been kept before the Church; that the first General Conference (1784) had courageously

[8] Lee records nothing on the subject, and Bangs (though he mentions the MS. Journal of the Conference) seems to have merely followed Lee.

faced it, and that the session preceding the present one declared itself "more than ever convinced of the great evil" of slavery. The question was soon again rife. Good William Ormond (though a Southerner) introduced it by moving that "whereas the laws now in force in two or more of the United States pointedly prohibit the emancipation of slaves, and the third clause of the ninth section of the Discipline forbids the selling of slaves, it is evident that the members of the Methodist societies who own slaves, and remove themselves and families to another state, or to distant parts of the same state, and leave a husband or a wife behind, held in bondage by another person, part man and wife, which is a violation of the righteous laws of God, and contrary to the peace and happiness of families. And it is further observed that the rule now existing among us prevents our members increasing the number of their slaves by purchase, and tolerates an increase of number by birth, which children are often given to the enemies of the Methodists. My mind being seriously impressed with these and several other considerations, I move that this General Conference take the momentous subject of slavery into consideration, and make such alterations in the old rule as may be thought proper."[9] Stephen Timmons moved, that if any of our traveling preachers marry persons holding slaves, and thereby become slaveholders, they shall be excluded our societies, unless they execute a legal emancipation of their slaves, agreeably to the laws of the state wherein they live. Nicholas Snethen moved, that this General Conference do resolve, that from this time forth no slaveholder shall be admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church. John Bloodgood moved, that all negro chil

[9] Journals of Gen. Conf., i, 37.

dren belonging to members of the Methodist Society, who shall be born in slavery after the fourth day of July, 1800, shall be emancipated: males at —— years, and females at —— years. James Lattomas moved, that every member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, holding slaves, shall, within the term of one year from the date hereof, give an instrument of emancipation for all his slaves; and the quarterly-meeting conference shall determine the time the slave shall serve, if the laws of the state do not expressly prohibit their emancipation. Ezekiel Cooper moved, that a committee be appointed to prepare an affectionate address to the Methodist Societies in the United States, stating the evils of the spirit and practice of slavery, and the necessity of doing away the evil as far as the laws of the respective states will allow; and that the said address be laid before the Conference for their consideration, and, if agreed to, be signed by the bishops in behalf of the Conference. William M'Kendree moved, that this General Conference direct the yearly Conferences to appoint a committee to draw up proper addresses to the state legislatures, from year to year, for a gradual abolition of slavery. The motion of Timmons prevailed. The Address to the Methodist Societies, proposed by Cooper, was prepared by a committee and sent forth; it provoked the resentment of Charleston, S. C., and led to the sufferings of Dougharty. The obnoxious documents were delivered by his colleague, Harper, to the authorities, and burned in presence of the Mayor. The result of these enactments was the following additions to the Discipline at the next session of the Conference, in 1804: "When any traveling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our Church, unless

he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the state in which he lives. The Annual Conferences are directed to draw up addresses for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, to the legislatures of those states in which no general laws have been passed for that purpose. These addresses shall urge, in the most respectful but pointed manner, the necessity of a law for the gradual emancipation of the slaves; proper committees shall be appointed, by the Annual Conferences, out of the most respectable of our friends, for the conducting of the business; and the presiding elders, elders, deacons, and traveling preachers shall procure as many proper signatures as possible to the addresses, and give all the assistance in their power in every respect to aid the committees, and to further this blessed undertaking. Let this be continued from year to year till the desired end be accomplished." The Methodist Church had thus far been the most active antislavery society in the nation, and in spite of some reverses was still to remain such, till the barbarous evil should be swept away forever.

While these deliberations were going on in the Conference, the whole city seemed swayed by religious excitement; the great revival of the times, which prevailed over most of the nation, seemed to centralize there. The churches could not contain the people, and many private houses had to be occupied for preaching. I have recorded the name of Catharine Ennalls, (sister to Bassett's wife,) who introduced Methodism into Dorchester, Md. She had married William Bruff, a Methodist merchant of Baltimore, and was now most active in the extraordinary scenes of this revival. Her house was continually open for preaching; Lee, Bruce, M'Combs, Smith, and others preached there with won-

derful success. Boehm, who, not being a member of the Conference, had leisure to share in these spiritual labors, describes the results as surprising. "The Lord," he says, "is at work in all parts of the town." "Christ the Lord is come to reign." Preachers and laymen passed from Bruff's house to the churches, "singing the praises of God along the streets. This greatly surprised the people, and hundreds came running out of their houses and followed us till we reached the house of God. There were wonderful exhibitions of power as we went through the streets, and we entered the house singing and shouting the praises of God."

The next day, after the adjournment, Asbury was preaching and pushing forward on his northern tour. Coke returned immediately to England, where he began to issue his Commentary in numbers, in 1801; he introduced Sunday-schools into Cornwall, advocated the Wesleyan missions, traveled largely in Ireland and other parts of the United Kingdom, and in the autumn of 1803 embarked for his final visit to the United States. Asbury welcomed him heartily, and planned a course of travel and preaching for him, amounting to nearly five thousand miles, about three thousand of which the tireless apostle completed by the next General Conference, which assembled in Light-street Church, Baltimore, May the 7th, 1804. Coke, "as senior bishop," presided.[10] John Wilson was elected Secretary. The records present, for the first time, a list of the members, who amounted to a hundred and twelve; five, however, were "excepted" as not entitled to vote, not having traveled four years. Many of the chief men of the ministry were there: among them Burke from the West; Pickering and Joshua Taylor from the East; Garrettson,

[10] Quinn's "Life," p. 82. Quinn was present.

Ostrander, Crawford, Hunt, and Sawyer from New York Conference; from that of Philadelphia, M'Claskey, Sargent, Ware, Owen, Woolsey, Cooper, Colbert, Sharpe, Roberts, Chandler, and other similar characters; from that of Baltimore, Henry Willis, George, M'Combs, Wells, Henry Smith, Quinn, Hitt, Snethen, Watters, Fleming; from that of Virginia, Lee, M'Caine, Bruce; from that of South Carolina, Dougharty and Jenkins. William Black, of Nova Scotia, was also present as a guest, and was allowed to speak, but not to vote, on the questions discussed. The Philadelphia Conference was represented by thirty-seven, Baltimore by thirty, New England by but four, and the great Western field by three. Philadelphia and Baltimore had sixty-seven of the members, nearly two thirds of the whole Conference. It was obvious that a reorganization of the body, on the principle of delegation, had become necessary, but it was deferred to the next session.[11]

The Discipline was elaborately revised, section by section, Coke reading item after item, and the Conference debating with no little interest.[12] Some changes were made. The bishops were required to allow the Annual Conferences to sit a week at least; hitherto they could conclude them at their own discretion. They still retained the right to appoint the times, but not the places of the sessions. They were not allowed to appoint preachers for more than two successive years to the same appointment; hitherto there had been no restriction, and some had been three years in one appointment.[13] Asbury rejoiced in the new rule as a great relief to the appointing power. The title of "Quarterly Meeting Conference" was given to the quarterly assembly of the

[11] Quinn, p. 86.

[12] Asbury complains of too much talk at this session. [13] Lee, p. 298.

official members of the circuits. Provision was made for the election of a presiding elder, to preside in an Annual Conference, in case of the absence of a bishop. The law against the marriage of Church members with "unawakened persons" was modified, the penalty being no longer expulsion, but that the offender shall "be put back on trial for six months." The "Book Concern" was ordered to be removed from Philadelphia to New York, and Ezekiel Cooper was reappointed agent, with Daniel Wilson as assistant. It was recommended to the Annual Conferences to restrain preachers from imprudent publications, by requiring their manuscripts to be submitted to their respective Conferences, or to the Book Committee at New York.

At the organization of the Church, in 1784, it was the first religious body of the country to insert in its constitutional law (in its Articles of Religion) a recognition of the new government, enforcing patriotism on its communicants. A very noteworthy modification (peculiarly interesting in our day) was made in this article at the present session. In the original article it was affirmed that the "Congress," etc., "are the officers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the General Act of Confederation," etc., the national constitution having not yet been adopted; but the present Conference, by a motion of Ezekiel Cooper, (a man noted for his sagacity,) struck out all allusion to the "Act of Confederation," inserting in its stead "the Constitution of the United States," etc., and declared that "the said states are a *sovereign* and independent *nation*."[14] Methodism thus deliberately, and in its constitutional law, recognized that the "Constitution" superseded the "Act

[14] The italics are my own.

of Confederation," and that the republic was no longer a confederacy but a *nation*, and, as such, supreme and sovereign over all its states. It was at a period of no little political agitation on the question of state sovereignty that this change was made: the Kentucky "Resolutions of 1798," and those of Virginia, 1799, had become the basis of a State Rights party. A contemporary Methodist preacher (Henry Boehm, still living) records that just previous to this time "there was great political excitement. Federalism and Democracy ran high. Such was the excitement that it separated families, and friends, and members of the Church. I was urged, on every side, to identify myself with one political party or the other, or to express an opinion. I felt sad to see what influence this state of feeling was producing in the Church." It was in such circumstances that the Methodist Episcopal Church took its stand for the National Constitution. After the adoption of that Constitution, Methodism never doubted the *sovereign* nationality of the republic, and never had the unstatesmanlike folly to recognize any State right of secession, or any sovereignty which is not subordinate to the National sovereignty. During the late civil war it appealed to its Article, as expressing the loyal duty of all its people, and they responded to the appeal with a patriotic devotion surpassed by no other religious communion of the country.[15]

Thomas Lyell[16] proposed the abolition of the presiding eldership, but was defeated "after a long debate." Bruce introduced a motion for the ordination of local elders, local preachers having hitherto been ad-

[15] Centenary of American Methodism, p. 203. New York, 1866.

[16] The name is mispelled, as Syell, throughout the published journals of this session.

mitted only to deacon's orders; it had a tie vote of 44 to 44, and, on motion of Coke, was postponed, "as unfinished business," till the next General Conference. A motion to elect another bishop was lost. The request of the British Conference for the return of Coke was again conceded, on condition that he should at any time be recalled by the demand of three Annual Conferences, and, at furthest, should be back in time for the next General Conference.

The subject of slavery was discussed as usual.[17] M'Caine introduced it by demanding that it be made the order of the day for a given time. At the appointed time Bruce brought it up by a petition from the Virginia Conference, when M'Caine made the motion "that the Question (in the Discipline) concerning it should run thus: 'What shall be done for the extirpation of slavery?'" which was "carried." The Journal then records that "a variety of motions were proposed on the subject, and, after a long conversation, Freeborn Garrettson moved, that the subject of slavery be left to the three bishops, to form such a section to suit the Southern and Northern states, as they in their wisdom may think best, to be submitted to this Conference. Carried. Bishop Asbury having refused to act on the last vote, the question was left open. Ezekiel Cooper moved, that a committee be formed, one from each Conference, to take the different motions and report concerning slavery. Carried. George Dougharty, Philip Bruce, William Burke, Henry Willis, Ezekiel Cooper, Freeborn Garrettson, and Thomas Lyell were appointed." This committee reported a long statute in answer to the new question, "What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" retaining

[17] Both Lee and Bangs, however, fail to mention the fact.

most of the act of 1796, but with modifying phrases; the adjective "African" is dropped and the word "slavery" alone retained. The clause providing for the expulsion of a member who should be guilty of selling a slave was qualified by the proviso, "except at the request of the slave, in cases of mercy and humanity, agreeably to the judgment of a committee of the male members of the society, appointed by the preacher who has the charge of the circuit." It was also provided that "if a member of our society shall buy a slave with a certificate of future emancipation, the terms of emancipation shall, notwithstanding, be subject to the decision of the quarterly-meeting conference." Methodists in the states of North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee were exempt from the rules on the subject, on account of the stringent laws of these states. The directions, to the Annual Conferences, to prepare forms of petition to the state legislatures for emancipation were omitted, and it was ordered that "our preachers, from time to time, as occasion serves, admonish and exhort all slaves to render due respect and obedience to the commands and interests of their respective masters." The treatment of their petitions and addresses in the South, and Dougharty's sufferings at Charleston, had evidently somewhat discouraged the preachers; their tone is more subdued, though the law, in its new form, is still very thorough, imposing the penalty of expulsion from the Conference upon any preacher who should "become, by any means, an owner of slaves," unless he should "execute their legal emancipation, if practicable, according to the laws of the state where he lives;" expulsion from the Church, on any member who should sell a slave, and conditional emancipation on any who should purchase one, except at the request of the slave. There was no

little significance in the motion of Bruce, made immediately after these proceedings on slavery, that an edition of the "spiritual part" of the Discipline be printed for the slaves, the laws on slavery not being in that newly made division of the book. The next day Dougharty moved that two thousand be thus provided "for the use of the South;" an explanation of the fact that copies of a mutilated edition of the Discipline are still occasionally found in old Methodist families in the South.

The Conference adjourned on the twenty-third of May, having sat seventeen days. It "closed," says Lee, "in peace, and the preachers parted in much love; but we had to lament before the Lord that there was very little stir of religion among us during the sitting. One principal reason of our barrenness, I believe, was owing to an improper plan which was adopted by the Conference in the beginning of their business, which was this: to admit men, women, and children into the galleries of the meeting-house to hear our debates. After a few days we were obliged to close the galleries, and sit in private, according to our usual plan. It was to the preachers a good Conference, but there was very little visible good done among the people in general."

Coke embarked for Europe, and was to see his American brethren no more; and Whatcoat, the junior bishop by election, but senior by age, was to meet with them no more in a General Conference.

CHAPTER XXII.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD: 1796–1804.

Numerical Gains — The Ministry — Locations — The Local Ministry — Joshua Marsden's Views of American Methodism — Itinerants who fell by the Yellow Fever — John Dickins's Character and Death — Deaths of Preachers — Geography of the Church — Its rapid Growth, especially in the West — Ratio of its Growth compared with that of the Nation — Conclusion.

These eight years were the most prosperous in the history of the Church thus far, surpassing in numerical gains any equal period. They end with more than a hundred and fifteen thousand (115,411) members, and four hundred preachers.[1] The denomination had gained nearly fifty-nine thousand (58,747) communicants, and more than one hundred (107) preachers, more than doubling its membership, and increasing its preachers by more than one third, notwithstanding the great number of "locations," which, as has been repeatedly shown, were not real losses to the ministry, nor hardly to the itinerancy. It gained more members in these eight years than it reported at the end of the first twenty-four of its history. The Philadelphia Conference took the lead, numerically. It returned more than twenty-eight thousand seven hundred (28,712;) Baltimore ranked next, and Virginia third.

The gain of a hundred and seven preachers is no indication of the actual ministerial growth of the Church;

[1] Bangs, (ii, p. 171,) following the Minutes, gives 113,134; but, as I have stated, the Minutes of 1804 give the Western statistics of the prior year; those for 1804 are given in the Minutes of 1805.

a host of its most commanding men retired to the local ranks in these years, but still to labor indefatigably. There were no less than two hundred and seventy-eight candidates received into full membership by the Conferences. There were but twenty-four deaths, and six expulsions or withdrawals; but there were two hundred and four locations, besides many who were put back into the local ministry from a probationary relation to the Conferences. Able local preachers, many of them veterans from the itinerancy, were now scattered over the whole country, and were among the chief founders of the Church in new regions. They were much more numerous than the traveling ministry. No reports of them were yet made in the statistics of the Church; but Lee, who had traveled in all its bounds with Asbury, endeavored to ascertain their number in 1799. His estimate was doubtless much short of the truth, but it gives eight hundred and fifty. There were then but two hundred and sixty-nine traveling preachers. About sixty of these local evangelists were beyond the Alleghanies. Virginia and Maryland had much more than a third of the whole number, New England had twenty-five, and about a quarter of these were in the remote province of Maine.

Near the close of our present period a distinguished English Methodist preacher (Joshua Marsden) visited the United States, (1802,) and has recorded his impressions of American Methodism. He says: "Here I had an opportunity of contemplating the vast extent of the work of God in the western world. I was greatly surprised to meet in the preachers assembled at New York such examples of simplicity, labor, and self-denial. Some of them had come five or six hundred miles to attend the Conference. They had little appearance of

clerical costume; many of them had not a single article of black cloth; their good bishops set them the example, neither of whom were dressed in black; but the want of this was abundantly compensated by a truly primitive zeal in the cause of their Divine Master. From these blessed worthies I learned that saving of souls is the true work of a missionary, and felt somewhat ashamed that I so little resembled men who appeared as much dead to the world as though they had been the inhabitants of another planet. The bishops, Asbury and Whatcoat, were plain, simple, venerable persons, both in dress and manners. Their costume was that of former times, the color drab, the waistcoat with large laps, and both coat and waistcoat without any collar; their plain stocks and low-crowned, broad-brimmed hats bespoke their deadness to the trifling ornaments of dress. In a word, their appearance was simplicity itself. They spoke but little, and appeared utterly averse to the frivolous compliments of the world. They were perfect antipodes to 'the thing that mounts the rostrum with a skip,' and had something truly apostolic in their general demeanor. I felt impressed with awe in their presence, and soon perceived that they had established themselves in the esteem and veneration of their brethren; not by the trappings of office, or the pomp and splendor of episcopal parade, but by their vast labors, self-denying simplicity, and disinterested love. These obtained for them the homage of the heart; they were the first in office, because they were first in zeal. Most of the preachers appeared to be young men, yet ministerial labor had impressed its withering seal upon their countenances. I cannot contemplate, without astonishment, the great work God has performed in the United States by means, humanly speaking, so utterly unlikely

Methodism has spread throughout the whole extent of this vast country. Along its mighty lakes and sylvan solitudes, where the population is but thinly scattered, circuits have been formed, chapels built, and the remote settlements, out of the reach of regular pastoral help, have greatly benefited by the visits and labors of the preachers. It is in America we see Methodism in its grandest form. All is here upon a scale of magnitude equal to the grandeur of the lakes, rivers, forests, and mountains of the country. In England Methodism is like a river calmly gliding on; here it is a torrent rushing along, and sweeping all away in its course. Methodism in England is the Methodism of Wesley, methodical, intelligent, and neat; in America it resembles Asbury, it has more roughness and less polish. The good they have done to the blacks is beyond calculation, and the new settlements in different parts of the interior, without such a ministry, might have degenerated into heathens. Methodism has been a peculiar blessing to this new world, which, having no religious establishment, is in many of its remote parts more dependent on such a ministry than can well be conceived by those who never visited the country. Many thousands of the settlers would have been left to precarious and contingent religious instruction, had not the Methodist preachers, with an alacrity and zeal worthy the apostolic age, spread themselves abroad in every direction, and become every man's servant for Christ's sake."[2]

Of the twenty-four itinerants who died in the field, in this period, we have already noticed Hezekiah C. Wooster, the Canadian pioneer, Tobias Gibson, the Southwestern founder and martyr, and William Ormond, the Southern "abolitionist," who fell by the yellow fever.

[2] Marsden's Narrative of a Mission, etc., p. 107. London, 1827.
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That pestilence prevailed along the Atlantic coast from the South even as far north as Portsmouth, N. H., spreading terror everywhere. It desolated Philadelphia in 1793, and reappeared in the North in 1798. Asbury returning from New England, wrote, in September of the latter year: "The fever is breaking out again in Portsmouth, and it is awful in Philadelphia. It seemeth as if the Lord would humble or destroy that city, by stroke after stroke, until they acknowledge God. Very serious appearances of this fever are now in New York." Later he wrote: "Most awful times in Philadelphia and New York, citizens flying before the fever as if it were the sword. I now wait the providence of God to know which way to go." The General Conference had hitherto been held in winter or autumn, but in 1800 it met, for the first time, in May, through fear of a return of the plague, though it had been appointed for the autumn, a change which it has always since followed; but the preachers braved it at their ministerial posts, and several of them heroically perished. Among its victims was John Ragan, an Irishman, who, after traveling in Maryland, Nova Scotia, and New Jersey, took the disease in Philadelphia, and died in 1797; a very "conscientious man," of "great solitude of mind," "remarkably fond of books," and a successful preacher. James King died of the epidemic at Charleston, S. C., the same year; a "friend of liberty," as well as religion, who had traveled "extensively and preached faithfully" in Georgia and South Carolina, and "gave his life, his labors, and his fortune" to the Church. William Early perished by it, a "zealous and a powerful preacher;" "it was supposed," says Lee, "that he took the yellow fever in Newbern, N. C.; but he continued to travel till the fever came on him so severely that he was

forced to lie down by the side of the road, where one of the neighbors found him, and asked him to his house, where he went, took to his bed, and, after a few days, died;" in the hour of death "he gave tokens of victory." Benton Riggin was another victim, who fell, in 1799, at Baltimore, the eighth who had thus suffered down to this date, say the Minutes. "This man of God," they add, "might have probably saved his life by flight; but he stayed, to live or die, in his station, and charge of souls." In 1800 James Tollison was another martyr, at Portsmouth, Va., a "man of excellent understanding," who had preached from Georgia to New York. He made his will, says Lee, and left all he possessed to his fellow-itinerants; even his clothes were brought to the next Conference and given to them.

But the most distinguished victim was John Dickins, who has often appeared in these pages as one of the chieftains of early Methodism, and who died at his post, as Book Agent and preacher, at Philadelphia, in 1798. He was a man of classical learning, a sound divine, a rare counselor, and a powerful preacher. "According to his time and opportunity," say the Minutes, "he was one of the greatest characters that ever graced the pulpit, or adorned the society of Methodists. After standing the shock of two seasons, 1793 and 1797, of the prevailing fever, he fell in the third and awful visitation of 1798." A short time before his death he wrote to Asbury: "I sit down to write as in the jaws of death. Whether Providence may permit me to see your face again in the flesh I know not. Perhaps I might have left the city, as most of my friends and brethren have done. I commit myself and family into the hands of God for life or death.'" Dying, he said to his wife, "Glory be to God, I can rejoice in his will,

whether for life or death! I know all is well. Glory be to Jesus! I hang upon thee. Glory be to thee, O my God! I have made it my constant business, in my feeble manner, to please thee, and now, O God, thou dost comfort me!" Clasping his hands, with tears running down his cheeks, he cried, "Glory be to God! Glory, glory be to God! My soul now enjoys such sweet communion with him, that I would not give it for all the world. Glory be to Jesus! O glory be to my God! I have not felt so much for seven years. Love him, trust him, praise him."

Besides these victims of the pestilence, the obituary list of the Minutes during these years records Albert Van Nostrand in 1797, at White Plains, N. Y., "circumspect and approved;" Michael H. R. Wilson, in 1798, at Strasburgh, Pa., "more than conqueror" in death; John N. Jones, at Charleston, S. C., 1798, "with unshaken confidence and joy in God;" William Wilkerson, in Gloucester County, Va., in 1798, "owned and honored as a witness for Jesus;" Thomas Haymond, in Ohio, in 1799, a man of "great goodness of heart, often laboring beyond his strength," a pioneer in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio; Robert Bonham, 1800, in Baltimore, a young man of "gracious heart, upright walk, and lively ministry;" Abraham Andrews, an old English Methodist, of "great strictness of life;" Salathiel Weeks, in Virginia, who "labored faithfully," and "wasted away with consumption;" in the same year, Charles Burgoon, who was of "a dejected spirit," "worn out with pain," but "died in peace;" Lewis Hunt, in Fleming County, Ky., in 1801, the young itinerant who followed Kobler in Ohio, and returned thence to his father's house to die of consumption, "in assured peace with God;" in 1802, in Hampshire County, Va.,

Edmund Wyman, who, though "much debilitated," and "apparently near his end," a year before his death, continued to travel till he could do so no more, and fell asleep in great "tranquility;" in Gloucester, N. J., in 1802, John Leach, "circumspect," "pious," "useful," a sufferer of "oppressive affliction," but who "died in great peace;" in Monmouth County, N. J., 1803, Anthony Turck, the Dutch itinerant whom we have met in the Pennsylvania Mountains, "a holy man, indefatigable, successful, subject to great afflictions," with "increasing sweetness in communion with God" toward his end, and "victory in death;" in Virginia, Nathan Jarrett, "a man of great zeal," "pleasing voice," and exceedingly affable, who, after lying insensible some time, "broke out in a rapture," singing, "Behold, the light is come! The glorious conquering King is nigh to take his exiles home," and in a few minutes fell asleep in Jesus; Rezin Cash, "a man of great solemnity of mind and goodness of heart," who "languished away," and "died in peace;" in 1804, at Ashgrove, N. Y., the scene of Embury, Bininger, and Ashton's last years, David Brown, a devout Irishman, who fell there laboring for the Church in the wilderness, dying in "a floodtide of joy," and uttering, as his last words, "My anchor is cast within the vail."

The General Conference of 1804 defined, and published in the Discipline, the boundaries of the Annual Conferences. They show the enlarged geography of the Church.

1. The New England Conference includes the District of Maine, and the Boston, New London and Vermont Districts.

2. The New York Conference comprehends the New York, Pittsfield, Albany, and Upper Canada Districts.

3. The Philadelphia Conference includes the remainder of the state of New York, all New Jersey, that part of Pennsylvania which lies on the east side of the Susquehanna River, except what belongs to the Susquehanna District, the state of Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and all the rest of the peninsula.

4. The Baltimore Conference comprises the remainder of Pennsylvania, the Western Shore of Maryland, the Northern Neck of Virginia, and the Greenbrier District.

5. The Virginia Conference includes all that part of Virginia which lies on the south side of the Rappahannock River, and east of the Blue Ridge, and all that part of North Carolina which lies on the north side of Cape Fear River, except Wilmington; also the circuits on the branches of the Yadkin.

6. The South Carolina Conference comprehends the remainder of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

7. The Western Conference includes the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, and that part of Virginia which lies west of "the great river Kanawha, with the Illinois and the Natchez."

Methodism was now intrenched in every state of the Union, and was penetrating every one of its opened territories. The few itinerants who had followed Gibson to the Natchez country invaded West Florida and East Louisiana. The germs of Churches now obscurely planted in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, were never to die, but to yield, in our day, the mighty harvest of 116,000 members and 600 preachers in Ohio; 90,000 members and 450 preachers in Indiana; 90,000 members and 560 preachers in Illinois; and to spread out sheltering boughs over all the West to the northern lakes and the

Pacific coast. We shall hereafter see the yet feeble forces of Western Methodism, hitherto so scattered that we have hardly been able to make anything like a coherent record of them, consolidated into thirty-five powerful Conferences, with three thousand itinerants, and half a million communicants, aside from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and all other branches of the denomination.[3] Though it began in the West nearly a quarter of a century after its beginning in the East, and was yet in the former but a dispersed and struggling band, it was destined to embody, in its ultramontane Conferences by our day, fully one half of its ministerial strength, and to move forward in the van of all the other Protestant Christianity of the Valley of the Mississippi.

But in all other sections of the Republic, not excepting New England, the inherent vitality and progressive energy of Methodism had now become indisputable, and it was henceforward to advance with a celerity unknown to any other form of Christianity in the nation. In the last decade of the last century (1790–1800) the ratio of the increase of the population of the United States was 35.02 per cent., that of Methodism, meanwhile, was but 12.60 per cent.; but this disproportion between the growth of the nation and the denomination was to cease for our age, if not forever, with the close of the eighteenth century.[4] Excepting the periods of the secession of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and of the southern Rebellion, the ratio of the increase of the

[3] Minutes of 1865, and Goss's Statistical History of Methodism, corrected by later data.

[4] Except at the time of the secession of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, (which, however, did not affect the general numerical strength of American Methodism,) and during the late war. My estimates are by decades from 1790.

Church has far outsped that of the nation. Even dating from 1790, and making no allowance for these two formidable drawbacks, the average ratio of the increase of the Methodist Episcopal Church has been, down to our day, (1865,) 56.85 per cent. for each ten years, while that of the population of the republic has been 35.82 per cent. The Church has led the nation at the rate of twenty-three per cent. each decade. And yet this statement, applying only to the Methodist Episcopal Church, gives no adequate estimate of the incredible vigor of Methodism, for about half its numerical force in the United States is outside of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The astonishing gains of the latter have been made in spite of secessions, (averaging about one for every fifteen years,) by which half the actual strength of American Methodism stands organized beyond its ecclesiastical lines, though identical with it in doctrine and internal discipline, and nearly so in ecclesiastical economy.

We stand, then, at present (1804) in a most interesting stage of its progress, about midway of the decade in which, after faltering long, in the ratio of its growth, behind that of the country, it was about to wheel from its position in the rear and advance with its triumphant banner to the front, not only of all other denominations, but of the nation itself, in the ratio of its increase; and thenceforward, for good or ill, lead the Christianity of the North American continent, adding to its ranks annually masses of population which not only astonished its own humble laborers, but the Christian world, and sometimes, in a single year, exceeded the entire membership of denominations which had been in the field generations before it.

At such a crisis, the detail with which I have thus far

recorded the early history of this curious and important religious development, will not perhaps appear irrelevant, for it is by such facts, showing its genetic conditions, but too often ignored in history, that we are to learn its true genius and probable destiny, and unfold, to its present and future people, its primitive and best lessons. The facts of its further progress, though scarcely less striking, will be more general, and can be more rapidly narrated.

BOOK VI.

FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804 TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1820.

CHAPTER I.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH.

Statistical Strength of the Church — Methodism in Savannah, Ga. — Jesse Lee there — Charleston, S. C. — Richmond, Va. — Character of Lewis Myers — William M. Kennedy — James Russell — He learns to read on his Circuit — His Eloquence — President Olin's Estimate of him — Lovick and Reddick Pierce — Richmond Nolley's Conversion — His Early Ministry — A Camp-meeting Scene — Samuel Dunwody.

The period upon which we now enter trenches, in some degree, upon our own times. Some of the itinerants who, at its beginning, and scores who at its close, were active in its scenes, still survive. We approach also events which assumed party aspects, and have left disputed questions and disputed reputations; the task of the writer becomes, therefore, more delicate, and in some of his personal references, at least, he must become more reticent, but with no sacrifice of essential truth.

During all these years Methodism was rapidly matured and consolidated throughout the South, now its chief field, possessing nearly half of its numerical strength. It reported at their beginning thirteen districts, eighty-seven circuits, and one hundred and sixty-

four itinerant preachers, with more than fifty-five thousand members, including, however, the ultramontane portions of the Baltimore and Virginia Conferences, which I have thus far geographically assigned to the West. At the close of the period it reported 23 districts, 162 circuits, and 272 preachers, with more than 101,500 members. Methodism had taken ecclesiastical possession of the South.

It had been for some time intrenched in the principal southern cities, except Savannah, and now, after long opposition, was established there. We have seen Hope Hull driven from that city in 1790. Jonathan Jackson and Josiah Randle invaded it in 1796, but had to retreat. John Garvin repeated the attempt in 1800, but failed of permanent success. In the South Carolina Conference of 1806 Asbury appealed to the preachers in behalf of the hostile post, and Samuel Dunwody, who had just joined the itinerancy, volunteered to enter it. He hired a small room, taught a school for his living, and began to preach, almost exclusively, however, to the family where he resided, and the almshouse and the hospital. The year closed with but twelve members, seven of whom were negroes.[1] This little band seems to have been organized by Jesse Lee, who made a preaching excursion southward, as far as Florida, in 1807,[2] and spent a short time in the city. On the nineteenth of April he writes: "At night, at Mr. Myers's, I preached on 1 Peter ii, 5. I had a crowded house, and more attended than could get in; many were forced to remain out of doors. I preached to them with some freedom, and they fed on the word

[1] Bangs, ii, 194. Dunwody's appointment does not appear in the Minutes till 1807.

[2] Dr. Lee's Life of Lee, p. 426.

with much apparent pleasure. All were solemn, and some were affected. It was a good time to many souls. After I dismissed the congregation I requested all that had been Methodists in other places, and wished again to be in society with us, to remain, and we would form a class. I took four of them into a class. There were others present, but I told them that I did not desire any person to join at that time but such as had been formerly in society with us; and if any others wished to join, they might have an opportunity after a few meetings. This was the first class that was ever formed in Savannah. Who knows but the Lord will multiply his blessings upon us, and make us a great people in this place, as well as in other places?"

Dunwody's successors had severe struggles. The local prejudice seemed, for years, unconquerable; but in 1812, after obtaining pecuniary aid from various parts of the country, a church was erected, bearing the name of Wesley Chapel, and dedicated by Asbury. Thus, about seventy-five years after Wesley's persecutions in this city, his cause permanently erected its standard there, inscribed with his own name, as it had in Baltimore, Norfolk, Richmond, Charleston, and nearly every other large community of the South. In Charleston the struggling Church now advanced effectively; Hammett's schismatic Trinity Church still held out for a part of the period, but at last yielded, and was absorbed by the parent denomination. By the death of Wells, the chief lay pillar of Charleston Methodism had fallen, but M'Farland, his friend and partner in business, took his place. The proslavery persecutions, in the times of Dougharty, shook the society, and public prejudice seemed long unconquerable, so that when young William Capers was sent there, about the beginning of

1811, it had but 145 white members on its records; but at the close of the present period it reported nearly 350 whites.

Methodism had struggled with hardly any success in Richmond, Va., and could show but sixty-three members at the beginning of the period; at its close there were more than two hundred and fifty. In no city in the United States had it, nor had indeed any form of real piety, slower advances than there. Richmond is first mentioned among the appointments of the Minutes, in 1793, as connected with Manchester; but it immediately disappears for six years. It is probable, however, that a class was organized in the city as early as 1793, and that the itinerants of adjacent circuits often preached for the little band. An English Methodist family, by the name of Barratt, and also a local preacher by name of Lacey, located there before 1793, and are supposed to have been its first Methodists. They procured the occasional ministrations of the itinerants of Williamsburgh Circuit, and meetings were held in the court house; but from this they were expelled by the magistrates as soon as a "revival" began to break out. They were compelled now to resort to a "common," west of the capitol; but Mrs. Barratt soon opened and fitted for their accommodation a large barn which stood on her premises. Asbury, M'Kendree, and other great men "preached in this stable-church." The congregation obtained again the use of the court-house. In 1799 Thomas Lyell, a very popular preacher, was sent to them. Only two houses of worship could then be found in the city; one of these was St. John's Church, whose resident clergyman preached there but three times a year, in order to save the glebe lands from forfeiture; the other was a small Baptist chapel. Lyell immediately began the erection

of a Methodist church. Another was built in 1812, and now the Methodists had become the strongest religious body in the city. The memorable burning of the theater and loss of life, in the previous year, had aroused some religious thought in the public mind. The first session of a Methodist Conference took place there at the beginning of 1812, and Jesse Lee was appointed to the station. He labored with his usual energy, preaching four times on Sunday, in the open air as well as in the churches, and holding meetings every night.

Methodism was therefore now not only founded, but fortified, in all the principal communities of the South. Meanwhile it spread prevailingly through the interior towns and settlements. It had long been tending toward the southwest. Early in the period it penetrated into Alabama, where it was destined to become the predominant religious power. The noted Lorenzo Dow had wandered into this wilderness in 1803, and was there also in 1804.[3] The historian of the state acknowledges that he preached the first Protestant sermon delivered on its soil.[4] Louisiana, ceded to the United States under Jefferson's administration, reached as far eastward as the Perdido River. The Indian title to some of the eastern lands was extinguished, and we early hear of white settlements on Tensas, Tombigbee, Buckatano, and Chickasaw. It was to these frontier and semibarbarous pioneers that Dow heralded Methodism. In 1807 Asbury called, in the South Carolina Conference, at Charleston, for missionaries to this then far western field, and among the appointments to the Oconee District, traveled by Josiah Randle, is Tombigbee Circuit, with Matthew P. Sturdevant as preacher. Randle District must have been immense and perilous,

[3] Dow's Journals. [4] Col. Rickett's History of Alabama.

for between the Oconee, from which it took its name, and the Tombigbee Circuit, lay an Indian country of four hundred miles extent.[5] The next year Tombigbee still appears in the Minutes, with Michael Burdge and Sturdevant as preachers, but the latter bears the title of "missionary," implying, probably, that he was to push to "regions beyond." At the end of this second year they report eighty-six Church-members, the germ of all the subsequent growth of Alabama Methodism. In 1809 John W. Kennon and Burdge were the whole itinerant force of the field. Their labor was hard and their success slow; but they returned to the Conference in 1811, reporting one hundred and sixteen members.

Meanwhile itinerants from Tennessee were entering the northeastern portions of the country. About the year 1807 the Indian title to the region north of the Tennessee River, bounded on the east by Flint River, on the west by Indian Creek, and reaching to the Tennessee boundary line, was extinguished, and in 1808 Madison County was organized. It was reached by the Elk (Tenn.) Circuit, and the next year we read the title of "Flint Circuit," with no less than one hundred and seventy Methodists, to whom the Conference, assembled in Cincinnati, sent Jedediah M'Minn as preacher. Thus the itinerants of the Southeast and the far West met on the new field of Alabama. In 1811 the western preachers at the North, and those of South Carolina at the South, returned an aggregate of about four hundred communicants in the country. The labors and sufferings of the earliest evangelist were as severe as any endured in the history of the Church, but they are unrecorded, and known now only by fragmentary traditions. John

[5] F. G. Furguson, in "The Home Circle," April, 1860, p. 220. Nashville, Tenn.

S. Ford, who was sent with Kennon to Tombigbee Circuit in 1810, relates that from the time they set out from the settlements in Georgia till they reached Fort Claiborne, on the Alabama River, they had to sleep under the trees thirteen nights. They carried their own provisions, except what they could occasionally obtain from the Indians, till they arrived among the whites on Bassett's Creek, now in Clark County. Here their circuit began, and crossing the Tombigbee at old Fort St. Stevens, continued thence up the Buckatano over to Chickasakay, and back through the Tensas settlements to Bassett's Creek. In the South Carolina Conference of 1810 Asbury called for volunteers for regions far beyond what was then called "the wilderness." The latter, for that day, was the country from the Ocmulgee River to near the Alabama. Beyond this lay still another "wilderness" of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians, and still beyond the latter lay the field to which the itinerants now began to move.

In 1811 the Western Conference, at Cincinnati, sent Thomas Stilwell and David Goodner to Richland and Flint, and at the close of the ecclesiastical year three hundred and forty-eight members are reported from Flint Circuit. The South Carolina Conference of 1811 ceases to report Tombigbee Circuit; but it reappears, in the Mississippi District, with one hundred and forty members, under the jurisdiction of the Western Conference. Alabama thus passes definitively into the ecclesiastical geography of the West, but with it went a company of strong South Carolina preachers, at whose head, as presiding elder, was Dunwody. His Mississippi District was to become, in the Minutes of 1817, the Mississippi Conference. Gibson, as we have seen, had reached the still remoter Southwest by the Ohio and

Mississippi Rivers, and in 1812 a band of four young evangelists departed from South Carolina, on horseback, for the distant fields of Mississippi and Louisiana. They were Richmond Nolley, Lewis Hobbs, Drury Powell, and Thomas Griffin. We shall have occasion to notice hereafter their adventures in the far southwest.

Of the host of able men whom we have heretofore seen in the southern itinerancy, most were yet abroad, and still in their prime vigor; others, who have not yet come under our notice, were now mighty in labors, and still others, of later historical prominence, were about to appear.

Lewis Myers was rising into notice by his character if not his talents; a small but sturdy Dutchman, of herculean energy, of habitual humor, mixed with Spartan severity; a man of few words, but those always directly to the point; a considerable reader, a pupil of Hope Hull's academy, and a close student of the Bible; eccentric and rough and formidable, yet of such real tenderness of heart that he seldom preached without tears. Through a ministry of a quarter of a century he had a hand in almost all the hardest work of the Church in the low country of Georgia and South Carolina. No man was more resolute to confront labor or suffering in the common cause; he therefore became a leader in his Conference, and, on the floor of the General Conference, he was respected for his strong practical sense, and admired for his loyal devotion to the Church. "He belonged," says a bishop of Southern Methodism, "to a class of men of heroic mould, who could take the saddle, face a day's hard rain, swim swollen creeks, live in the cabins of the poor, eat bear-meat, if necessary, and preach without manuscript every day of the week; who went girded into the great battle-field where ignor-

ance, vice, and semi-barbarism were to be confronted, and fought a good, honest fight, very different from the sham-battles of holiday heroes. He was a man of weight in the Conference, well versed in affairs, of sound judgment, and looked up to with universal respect."[6] He died in 1851, a patriarch of the South, having been connected with the ministry a full half century, though about half the time in a superannuated relation, a sufferer from spasmodic asthma, brought on by his itinerant exposures and labors.

William M. Kennedy began his career at the beginning of this period. Born in 1783, in that part of South Carolina which was ceded to Tennessee in 1790, he had the early hardy training of the western mountains. He lived some years in South Carolina, and at last in Georgia, where, in 1803, he was brought into the Church under the ministry of Hope Hull. Joining the South Carolina Conference of 1805, he filled its most important appointments for more than thirty years, half of the time as presiding elder. In 1839 he was struck with apoplexy; his Conference placed him on its superannuated list, but he continued to labor. "I wish," he exclaimed, "the messenger of death to find me at my Master's work." Traveling in the service of the Church, he was suddenly struck down by another attack of his malady at the foot of a large oak in Newburgh District, S. C., and died in 1840, lamented as one of the noblest men of Southern Methodism. He was nearly six feet high, robust, with a large head, an intellectual front, an expressive eye, dark complexion, features radiant with benevolence and intelligence, and a voice of singular melody, which procured for him the title of "the sweet singer of the South Carolina Conference." He

[6] Bishop Wightman's Life of Capers, p. 346. Nashville, 1858.

was an instructive and, sometimes, a powerful preacher, especially at camp-meetings, where the charm of his voice and the ardor of his temperament gave him an extraordinary control of the largest congregations. He was singularly gifted and effective in prayer. "Prayer was his vital breath," says one of his intimate friends.[7] His deep piety impressed all who knew him. He had also "a rich fund of choice humor." He was greatly successful as a presiding elder, by the prudence of his counsels, and the quickening influence of his preaching and example over his vast districts. In fine, William M. Kennedy was one of the most effective founders of Methodism in the further south at this early and critical period.

One of the most memorable evangelists of the southern itinerancy, a man of real and rare genius, appeared in the same year with Kennedy. James Russell was born in Mecklenburgh County, N. C., about 1786. Early left an orphan, poor and untrained, he had to learn to read after he joined the South Carolina Conference in 1805. He had been refused license to exhort because of his ignorance, but his surpassing natural powers at last bore him above all opposition. He carried his spelling-book with him along his circuit, seeking assistance in its lessons even from the children of the families where he lodged. If the state of society in the far south at this early time would allow such a fact to detract from the ministerial character of ordinary men, it could not with him, for his extraordinary power in the pulpit armed him with a supreme authority. He was capable of the highest natural oratory, striking with awe or melting with pathos his crowded auditories. His self culture advanced rapidly. He became a good

[7] Prof. Martin, of Columbia, S. C. Sprague, p. 419.

English scholar, and a man of refined taste, commanding the admiration of the most intelligent as well as the most illiterate among his hearers, and "standing," says a bishop of his Church, "prominent among such men as Hope Hull, George Dougharty, John Collinsworth, and Lewis Myers. He was one of the fathers of the Southern Methodist Church, and famous in three states as among the most eloquent and powerful preachers of his time. Of medium height, thin, his face seamed with wrinkles, his lips compressed and colorless, and his brow overhung apparently with care, (the latter years of his life having been unfortunate through pecuniary embarrassment,) when he rose in the pulpit the enthusiasm of youth seemed to awake, and the flash of his eye and the ring of his percussive voice, and the animation and ease of his manner, all told you that no ordinary man was before you. In addition to a deep personal piety, he possessed the genius of the pulpit orator. He could move a multitude of five thousand hearers at a camp-meeting with the ease of one born to command, and with the momentum of a landslide." [8]

In person he was interesting; his form was perfectly symmetrical, his head well developed, his eyes blue but keen, hair black, nose Roman, mouth finely chiseled, voice wonderfully musical. Hard necessity compelled him to locate in 1815; he entered into business, and was overwhelmed by misfortunes, under which he suffered till his death in 1825. His Christian character remained unimpeached through all his troubles, and death was a liberation to him. "Before next Sabbath," he exclaimed, "I shall be in paradise;" and his hope was not disappointed. President Olin, who heard him with delight, says: "He was the prey of

[8] Bishop Wightman, in Sprague, p. 411.

fatal disease; and a weight of misfortune, such as rarely falls to the lot of mortals, had bowed down his spirit. Whenever I expressed what I always felt—the highest admiration of his original genius and irresistibly powerful preaching, I could perceive sadness gathering upon the brow of the old Methodists as they exclaimed, 'Ah, poor Brother Russell! he preaches well, very well, and it is long since I heard such a sermon before. But he is no longer what he used to be. You should have heard him fifteen years ago.' It is certain that the preaching of Russell, fallen as he was from the strength of his manhood, made an impression upon me such as has seldom been produced by another. Perhaps he had lost something from the vigor of his action, and the pathos of his exhortation. The vividness and the luxuriance of his imagination might have been withered in the furnace of suffering; but the strong distinguishing features of his original mind, his shrewdness of perception, his urgency of argument, his inimitable aptness of illustration, his powers of rapid and novel combination, were unimpaired. He abounded in metaphors, and no man made a better use of them. Nothing could exceed the efficiency or the simplicity of his rhetorical machinery. The aptness and force of his metaphors always atoned for their occasional meanness. Their effect upon the congregation was often like that of successive shocks of electricity. If he was powerful as a preacher he was mighty as an intercessor. Indeed it was in the closet that the holy flame of his devotion was kindled. The trophies of pardoning love were multiplied around him. God gave to his prayers and his preaching a degree of success seldom witnessed since the time of the apostles. Several thousand souls were given to him, within the South Carolina Confer-

ence, as the seals of his ministry, and the crown of his eternal rejoicing."

Lovick Pierce and his brother, Reddick Pierce, entered the itinerancy in the same year with Russell and Kennedy. The former still lives a representative of Southern Methodism after more than sixty years of labors and sufferings for it; a man of the soundest faculties, of unflagging energy, wise in counsel, powerful in the pulpit, and of hardly paralleled public services, which, however, have yet had no such record as would admit of their just historic appreciation. In 1799 Methodist preachers on the old Edisto Circuit extended their travels to the obscure locality (on Tinker's Creek) in South Carolina, where the two brothers were growing up with hardly any opportunities of religious improvement. Their father "despised the Methodists with bitterness,"[9] but the itinerants were welcomed by some of his neighbors. The two youths obtained his permission to attend one of their meetings, at which James Jenkins preached. "This," Lovick Pierce writes, "was the first time we ever heard the gospel preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and that day we both resolved to lead a new life; then and there we commenced our life of prayer." In 1801 they joined the Church, and within three weeks all the family, who were old enough, were enrolled in it. The next year a Methodist chapel was erected near their house; both brothers began to exhort, and in December of 1804 both were received into the Conference at Charleston. Reddick Pierce was one of the purest of men, and his word was in prevailing power. "In those days," writes his brother, "in all that country around us

[9] An obituary of his brother, by Dr. L. Pierce, Charleston Chr. Ad., Aug. 13, 1860.

in which my brother had done all his frolicking, I never knew him to make an ineffectual effort. I myself saw on one occasion, under one of his exhortations, eleven sinners fall from their seat — from one seat—to the ground, crying for mercy. And this was but a remarkable instance of a common occurrence, especially under his overwhelming appeals." Reddick Pierce died in 1860, after faithful services, which contributed greatly to the outspread of Methodism in South Carolina.

Lovick Pierce as pastor, presiding elder, a leader in his Annual Conference, a representative in the General Conference, has hardly been surpassed in the South. He has led many a young hero into the ministerial ranks, and his early labors were honored by the conversion of one of the noblest martyrs of the itinerancy. Richmond Nolley was, by birth, a Virginian, but his parents removed with him early to Georgia, where he was soon left a poor and orphan boy. Captain Lucas, a Methodist of Sparta, Ga., gave him a home and employment. A camp-meeting, still famous in Georgia Methodist traditions, was held, near Sparta, in 1806, and attended by an immense crowd. It was impossible for all the people to hear the preacher, and Lovick Pierce was deputed to hold a separate meeting on adjacent ground. He stood upon a table and proclaimed the word with such power that a hearer, the daughter of Captain Lucas, fell, smitten by it, in the outskirts of the throng. The whole multitude was soon in commotion. A simultaneous movement was made toward the preacher. "The people fell upon their knees, and groans and prayers and praise were mingled. This work continued during the remainder of the day and the night. Over one hundred souls professed conversion around

that table."[10] Nolley, and a fellow-clerk in the store of Lucas, were among these converts.

He continued under the parental care of his friend Lucas a year longer, preparing himself for the ministry by exhorting in the neighborhood, and in 1807 was received by the Conference, and sent to Edisto Circuit, where he did good service among the slaves. In 1809 he was appointed to Wilmington, N. C., where he rejoiced in a general revival. The next year he was in Charleston, S. C., where he labored sturdily against no little persecution. Fire-crackers were often thrown upon him in the pulpit, and while he was on his knees praying; but he would shut his eyes, that he might not be distracted by menaces, and preach and pray on with overwhelming power, a habit which, it is said, lasted through the remainder of his life. His voice was as a trumpet, and no man of the South proclaimed the Gospel with greater energy than he. It was already manifest that his character was, in the highest sense, heroic, and that the bravest work of the itinerancy befitted him. Accordingly in 1812 we find him wending his way, with three other preachers, toward the Mississippi. Remarkable scenes and a martyr's death awaited him there. But we must part with him at present, to meet him soon again in his new field.

Samuel Dunwody also began his itinerant life in South Carolina early in this period, (in 1806,) though he was a native of Pennsylvania, born in Chester County in 1780. We have already seen him struggling to found the first Methodist Church in Savannah, Ga., in 1807. For forty years he traveled and preached like an apostle through much of Georgia and the Caro

[10] Bishop M'Tyeire in Biog. Sketches of Itinerant Ministers, p. 261. Nashville, 1858.

linas, greatly extending and fortifying the denomination. In 1846 he was compelled to retire to the superannuated ranks; and "fell asleep," in a most tranquil death, in 1854, a veteran of nearly seventy-four years. He was of Irish blood and energy; rough in features, in voice, in manners; resolute to the uttermost, having a "determined spirit, which would only require the influence of circumstances to render its actings truly heroic."[11] Like many, if not most of his itinerant associates, he was given to humor, "having a vein of keen irony;" but such was his piety that "he appeared dead to the world in a degree rarely witnessed, and alive to everything that involved the salvation of men." "Praying seemed scarcely less natural to his spiritual life than breath to his physical life," says an intelligent member of another denomination, under the roof of whose parsonage he often found shelter.[12] All about him, "dress, horse, saddle-bags," were marked by poverty, by disregard of fashion, or even comfort; he seemed totally absorbed in his spiritual life and work; and "his external life," it is said, "so manifestly drew its powers from the spirit within, that there was dignity, it would hardly be too much to say sublimity, in his roughness." It is added, by this personal witness, "that simplicity and plainness in him were widely disconnected from rudeness and vulgarity; they were rather the honorable hardships of the soldier's warfare." He attained commanding influence in his Conference as one of its principal, though one of its least polished representatives, and was charged by Asbury, in 1811, as we have noticed, with the leadership of the whole southwestern field of Methodism, as presiding elder of the Mississippi District.

[11] Bishop Morris; Sprague, p. 436. [12] In Sprague, p. 437.

CHAPTER II.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH, 1804–1820: CONTINUED.

Job Guest — Alfred Griffith — Wilson Lee and Black Charles — John Early — His long Services and Character — Major Capers — Conversion of William Capers — Begins to Preach — Interview with Asbury — A Negro Founds Methodism in Fayetteville — His remarkable Story — Capers at Charleston — Colored Preachers — Change of Anti-slavery Policy — Capers's Success and Character — Beverly Waugh — John Davis — Alfred Griffith — Robert R. Roberts.

The name of Job Guest has incidentally but repeatedly occurred in our pages. His friend, Alfred Griffith, who entered the itinerancy with him in 1806, says that "as to his toils and sufferings through a long-continued and faithful service, he might justly have adopted the language of the apostle of the Gentiles: 'In labors abundant, in fastings oft, in persecutions, in afflictions,' etc. From the shores of Lake Erie on the north, with all the intermediate territory on the south, to the waters of Chesapeake Bay, together with all Western Maryland, Western Pennsylvania, and Northern and Southwestern Virginia, was formed the field over which, from time to time, his labors were distributed by the proper authorities. And nobly did he fulfill his mission, 'to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' And God gave him great acceptability among the people, and much success in winning souls to Christ. He was a man of more than ordinary talents, and was instrumental in adding many hundreds, not to say thousands, to the fold of the Redeemer during a ministry of nearly fifty years of effective service, in which he filled

nearly all the important appointments in the Conference."[1] He died in 1857, aged seventy-two years, a man of the purest, the most faultless character, and of such extended and long continued labors as deserve a more thorough commemoration than the scanty records of the Church will allow.

Alfred Griffith, himself, beginning his itinerant career at the same time, claims our attention here, though, as he still lives, it will devolve on the future historian of the Church to give a fuller record of a life so long and so replete with usefulness. He was born in 1783, in Montgomery County, Md., and brought into the Church in 1801, in a revival which began on Montgomery Circuit under the exertions of Wilson Lee, who had recently returned, broken in health from his great western labors, but was preaching with his usual zeal as a supernumerary of the circuit. At one of Lee's appointments (in a private house) lived a remarkably devoted colored Methodist by the name of Charles. The preacher having determined to open the campaign at this place, covenanted with the faithful African, that at the next meeting, while he should be preaching in the principal room, Charles should be on his knees, in a shed-room, opening into that in which the service was proceeding, engaged in supplication for the success of the word. "When the time came, and the itinerant, of whom men stood in awe while they admired him, arose in the crowded parlor, true to his engagement, Charles was on his knees in the shed room. There was present on that day in that place a power more than human. The people fell on every side. They prayed, they wept sore. Into the midst of this scene now came the pious negro. He had heard the Lord's answer, and, not ven-

[1] Minutes, 1858

turing to rise, he entered the room walking on his knees, while the tears streamed down his black face, now made, if not white, at least intensely bright by the grateful joy which overspread it. Many souls were converted at that single meeting, which was the more glorious because it was only one of a glorious series, only the beginning of a widely extended, long-continued revival of religion, reaching to Baltimore city and county, to Frederick County, to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, to Pennsylvania, and to Virginia, and lasting till 1808."[2]

In 1806 young Griffith was received into the Baltimore Conference, and sent to the Wyoming country, where we have already witnessed his itinerant hardships. In his numerous subsequent appointments he has been an able contributor to the outspread of the Church in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, a leader in the Baltimore Conference, and a venerated counselor in the General Conference. He is small in stature, like Paul of unpretentious personal presence, of simple manners, of few words, but strikingly pertinent in debate, profound and statesmanlike in counsel, and in familiar conversation remarkably entertaining, anecdotal, and humorous. He survives, burdened with the infirmities of age, but cheered by the retrospect of the success of his cause, and the prospect of reunion with the good and great men with whom he has labored and suffered for it.

A young man, by the name of John Early, was admitted to the Virginia Conference in 1807. His family belonged to the most influential class of society in Bedford County, Va., where he was born in 1786, became a Methodist in 1804, and was licensed to preach two years

[2] Rev. Dr. Nadal, in Ladies' Repository, Jan. 1860.

later, in his twenty-first year. He had begun his public labors among Mr. Jefferson's slaves at Poplar Forest, in Bedford County, and, notwithstanding his adherence to the policy of the Church, South, respecting the slavery controversy, he has been noted, from the beginning, for his interest in the religious welfare of the colored race. His strong characteristics quickly marked him as a superior man. Possessing an iron constitution, a practical but ardent mind, a notably resolute will, and habits rigorously systematic and laborious, he became a favorite coadjutor, a confidential counselor of Asbury, M'Kendree, Bruce, Jesse Lee, and their associate leaders of the denomination. He was a renowned, if not indeed, a dreaded, disciplinarian. His preaching was simple, direct, and powerful, and few, if any, of his early fellow-itinerants gathered more recruits into the Church in Virginia. In 1811 he received about five hundred probationers on his circuit, Grenville, Va. When only about twenty-seven years old, Asbury, against his remonstrance, made him presiding elder on the Meherren District, Va., an office in which his extraordinary business talents, as well as his energetic preaching, had full scope, and were crowned with memorable success. He held many camp-meetings, at one of which, in Prince Edward County, more than eight hundred souls were converted in a single week. Every interest of the Church received his devoted and persistent attention. He was a chief founder of Randolph Macon College, Va., and has continued to be its rector down to our day. In the General Conference of 1832 he received a large vote for the episcopate, and would probably have been elected had it not been for his connection with slavery.

Possessing surpassing capacity for business, he was often called upon for important services by both Church

and State. Bangs nominated him for the Cincinnati Book Agency, and others for that of New York in 1836. His fellow-citizens repeatedly nominated him for Congress; but he declined the honor as a detraction from his ministerial office. The general government offered him the governorship of Illinois when it was a territory. President Adams solicited him to accept the same office in the territory of Arkansas, and President Tyler that of Comptroller of the Treasury; but his answer was that "he could not come down" to such positions. He took an active part in the measures that resulted in the division of the Church in 1844, and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; shared in its convention at Louisville, Ky., in 1845; was the president pro tempore of its first General Conference at Petersburgh, Va.; and was there elected its first Book Agent. In 1854 he was made one of its bishops at Columbus, Georgia.

John Early still lives, after one of the most laborious careers in the history of the American Methodist itinerancy. One who has well known him says that "he has probably received more persons into the Methodist Church than any man in it. The accounts he can give of scenes in Conferences, in churches, on the road, in social circles, or around the sick bed, are 'telling beyond description.' As a presiding officer we seldom see his equal for precision, dispatch, and business. His preaching is always dignified, simple, and impressive, and often perfectly irresistible; thousands of souls, on earth and in heaven, are the seals of his ministry. He still retains this power; his large blue eye yet flashes with a tranquil and holy zeal; his powerful voice, though affected by age, yet, like the blast of a trumpet, peals forth the invincible truth, and his erect

and vigorous form is yet capable of much labor. His knowledge of character is intuitive, his friendship inviolable, his firmness inflexible, his house the home of hospitality and social happiness; and if there be in his well-balanced character one feature more prominent than the rest, it is, that in the functions of the episcopal office, he never sacrifices the interests of the Church to his prejudices or his friendships; if one must suffer, it is always his friend or himself."[3] At the Southern General Conference in New Orleans, 1866, he obtained a release from his episcopal duties on account of his advanced age; but he still sojourns among the Conferences and Churches, a welcome guest, venerated for his long services, and laboring according to his strength.

The next year after Early's admission to the itinerancy another young man, who was to attain episcopal dignity and national reputation, entered the ministry in the South Carolina Conference. Major William Capers was of Huguenotic ancestry, and a brave officer of the Revolution, fighting in the battles of Fort Moultrie and Eutaw, suffering in the siege of Charleston, and famous in the band of Marion's men. After the war he became a devoted Methodist, under the ministry of Henry Willis, in Charleston. At his winter residence, a plantation in St. Thomas's Parish, S. C., was born, in 1790, his son, William Capers, one of the most representative men of American Methodism for nearly half a century. He was early sent to a boarding school, was entered as a sophomore in the South Carolina College in his sixteenth year, and subsequently studied law in Charleston. The fairest prospect of professional success and political distinction appealed to his youthful ambition. His tem-

[3] Letter of Rev. George Rosser to the author.

perament was vivid, brilliant, and generous. He loved society, and was gayest of the gay; but his Methodistic domestic training had touched the deeper susceptibilities of his soul. It had preserved him from youthful vices, and, in 1806, at a camp-meeting on the estate of Rembert, of Rembert Hall, (so historical in early Methodism,) his conscience was thoroughly awakened. After a short period of healthful religious progress he became the victim of a morbid delusion, (sanctioned by the current Calvinistic theology, but denied by Methodism,) under which he suffered for about two years, and which deterred him from an open profession of his faith. Meanwhile his father had also been led astray by the schism of Hammett in Charleston, and had lost the life, if not the form, of his piety. In 1808 his sister was converted at a camp-meeting in the Rembert neighborhood, and returned home exemplifying the power and peace of the gospel. An affecting scene soon followed, which he describes:[1] "It grew night; supper was over; it was warm, and we were sitting in a piazza open to the southwest breeze which fans our summer evenings. My sister was singing with a soft, clear voice some of the songs of the camp-meeting, and as she paused, my father touched my shoulder with his hand, and slowly walked away. I followed him till he had reached the furthest end of the piazza on another side of the house, when, turning to me, he expressed himself in a few brief words, to the effect that he felt himself to have been for a long time in a backslidden state, and that he must forthwith acknowledge the grace of God in his children or perish. His words were few, but they were enough, and strong

[1] In his very interesting autobiography, given in Bishop Wightman's Life of Capers. Nashville, 1858.

enough. I sank to my knees and burst into tears at the utterance of them, while for a moment he stood trembling by me, and then bade me get the books. The Bible was put on the table; the family came together. He read the hundred and third psalm, and then he kneeled down and prayed as if he felt indeed that life or death, heaven or hell, depended on the issue. That was the hour of grace and mercy, grace restored to my father as in times of my infancy, and mercy to me in breaking the snare of the fowler that my soul might escape."

His law books were laid aside for the Bible. We have already seen William Gassaway summoning him out to accompany him around a circuit. He went to Camden to meet Gassaway for the purpose, and diffidently took refuge in an inn, at the door of which the venerable Rembert, who was passing, met him, and exhorted him to go with Gassaway. He found Kennedy with the latter, and accompanied them to the church. Kennedy preached, and afterward beckoned him to the pulpit, where Gassaway, who sat in the desk, cried out to him, "Exhort!" He did so, and thus began his distinguished ministerial career.

He continued to go round the circuit, laboring energetically, and at a camp-meeting at Rembert's met Asbury, and was licensed to preach, though he was not yet through his probation in the Church. His interview there with the bishop was a characteristic scene. His father had long been alienated from Asbury (formerly his honored guest) by the Hammett schism. "I was introduced," he writes, "to Bishop Asbury immediately on his first coming to the camp-meeting, as I happened to be in the preachers' tent at the time of his arrival. I approached him timidly, you may be

sure, and with a feeling of profound veneration; but Ah,' said he, 'this is the baby; come and let me hug you;' meaning that I was the baby when he was last at my father's house. On my father's entering the tent, he rose hastily from his seat and met him with his arms extended, and they embraced each other with mutual emotion. It had been some seventeen years since they had seen each other, and yet the bishop asked after Sally and Gabriel as if it had been but a few months, and repeated gleefully, 'I have got the baby.' It was evident that no common friendship had subsisted between them; and how much happier had those years of estrangement been to my honored father if they had been passed in the fellowship which he had been seduced to leave. I hate schism; I abhor it as the very track and trail of him who 'as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.'"

In the last month of 1808 young Capers was received by the Conference, and appointed to the Wateree Circuit, on which he had to fill twenty-four appointments every four weeks. He had formidable labors and trials, and was well initiated. In 1809 he traveled Pee-Dee Circuit, where he was especially devoted to the religious welfare of the colored people. He found many of them eminently pious, and some as eminently useful. One of his churches, at Fayetteville, had been founded by a faithful negro, whose name has thereby become historic in the annals of the Conference. "The most remarkable man," he says, "in Fayetteville when I went there, and who died during my stay, was a negro by the name of Henry Evans, who was confessedly the father of the Methodist Church, white and black, in Fayetteville, and the best preacher of his time in that quarter, and who was so remarkable as to have become

the greatest curiosity of the town, insomuch that distinguished visitors hardly felt that they might pass a Sunday in Fayetteville without hearing him preach. Evans was from Virginia; a shoemaker by trade, and, I think, was born free. He became a Christian and a Methodist quite young, and was licensed to preach in Virginia. While yet a young man he determined to remove to Charleston, S. C., thinking he might succeed best there at his trade. But having reached Fayetteville on his way to Charleston, his spirit was stirred at perceiving that the people of his race in that town were wholly given to profanity and lewdness, never hearing preaching of any denomination. This determined him to stop in Fayetteville, and he began to preach to the negroes with great effect. The town council interfered, and nothing in his power could prevail with them to permit him to preach. He then withdrew to the sand-hills, out of town, and held meetings in the woods, changing his appointments from place to place. No law was violated, while the council was effectually eluded, and so the opposition passed into the hands of the mob. These he worried out by changing his appointments, so that when they went to work their will upon him, he was preaching somewhere else. Meanwhile, whatever the most honest purpose of a simple heart could do to reconcile his enemies, was employed by him for that end. He eluded no one in private, but sought opportunities to explain himself; avowed the purity of his intentions, and even begged to be subjected to the scrutiny of any surveillance that might be thought proper to prove his inoffensiveness; anything, so that he might but be allowed to preach. Happily for him and the cause of religion, his honest countenance and earnest pleadings were soon powerfully

seconded by the fruits of his labors. One after another began to suspect their servants of attending his preaching, not because they were made worse, but wonderfully better. The effect on the public morals of the negroes, too, began to be seen, particularly as regarded their habits on Sunday, and drunkenness, and it was not long before the mob was called off by a change in the current of opinion, and Evans was allowed to preach in town. At that time there was not a single church edifice in town, and but one congregation, (Presbyterian,) which worshiped in what was called the State-house, under which was the market, and it was plainly Evans or nobody to preach to the negroes. Now, too, of the mistresses there were not a few, and some masters, who were brought to think that the preaching which had proved so beneficial to their servants might be good for them also, and the famous negro preacher had some whites as well as blacks to hear him. From these the gracious influence spread to others, and a meeting-house was built. It was a frame of wood, weather-boarded only on the outside, without plastering, about fifty feet long by thirty wide. Seats, distinctly separated, were at first appropriated to the whites, near the pulpit. But Evans had already become famous, and these seats were insufficient. Indeed, the negroes seemed likely to lose their preacher, negro though he was; while the whites, crowded out of their seats, took possession of those in the rear. Meanwhile Evans had represented to the preacher of Bladen Circuit how things were going, and induced him to take his meeting-house into the circuit, and constitute a Church there. And now there was no longer room for the negroes in the house when Evans preached; and, for the accommodation of both classes, the weatherboards were knocked

off, and sheds were added to the house on either side; the whites occupying the whole of the original building, and the negroes these sheds as a part of the same house. Evans's dwelling was a shed at the pulpit end of the church. And that was the identical state of the case when I was pastor. Often was I in that shed, and much to my edification. I have not known many preachers who appeared more conversant with Scripture than Evans, or whose conversation was more instructive as to the things of God. He was a Boanerges, and in his duty feared not the face of man. He died during my stay in Fayetteville in 1810. The death of such a man could not but be triumphant, and his was distinguishingly so. I was with him just before he died. His last breath was drawn in the act of pronouncing, 1 Cor. xv, 57, 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' On the Sunday before his death the little door between his humble shed and the chancel where I stood was opened, and the dying man entered for a last farewell to his people. He was almost too feeble to stand at all, but, supporting himself by the railing of the chancel, he said, 'I have come to say my last word to you. It is this: None but Christ. Three times I have had my life in jeopardy for preaching the gospel to you. Three times I have broken the ice on the edge of the water and swum across the Cape Fear to preach the gospel to you, and now, if in my last hour I could trust to that, or to anything else but Christ crucified, for my salvation, all should be lost, and my soul perish forever.' A noble testimony! worthy, not of Evans only, but St. Paul. His funeral at the church was attended by a greater concourse of persons than had been seen on any funeral occasion before. The whole community appeared to

mourn his death, and the universal feeling seemed to be that in honoring the memory of Henry Evans we were paying a tribute to virtue and religion. He was buried under the chancel of the church of which he had been in so remarkable a manner the founder."

At the Conference in the latter part of 1810, Capers was sent to Charleston. At this time there were seventy-four preachers belonging to the Conference, employed on thirty-nine circuits and stations, of which twenty-four belonged to South Carolina, and that part of North Carolina lying south of Cape Fear and the head-waters of Yadkin; fourteen belonged to Georgia, and there were two preachers employed as missionaries in Alabama. The returns gave seventeen thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight whites, and eight thousand two hundred and two colored members. Charleston had yet but two churches, Cumberland-street and Bethel; Hammett's "Trinity Church" having not yet been ceded to the denomination. The antislavery measures of Methodism had arrayed the community against it. Even native preachers, belonging to slaveholding families, like Capers, were hardly allowed to preach to the colored people for miles around the city; but there were some "extraordinary colored men," who were "raised up for the exigencies of these times in the city Churches, such as Castile Selby, Amos Baxter, Thomas Smith, Peter Simpson, Smart Simpson, Harry Bull, Richard Halloway, Alek Harlston, and others, men of deep piety and natural talents, who were made preachers, and were sent out by Capers and his colleagues to minister to the slaves on the plantations in all directions. It was thus that Methodism got its powerful hold on the black population of South Carolina. They labored successfully on Goose Creek, Cooper

River, Wanda, in St. Paul's parish, St. James, St. John, and Wadmalaw Islands, even as far as Pon-Pon River. The opposition of masters to the labors of white preachers among the slaves led to a compromise of the stringent policy of the Church against slavery. About this time we perceive the tendency to a more moderate course in even Asbury's resolute mind. In 1809 he writes, in the South, "We are defrauded of great numbers by the pains that are taken to keep the blacks from us; their masters are afraid of the influence of our principles. Would not an *amelioration* in the condition and treatment of slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans than any attempt at their *emancipation?* The state of society, unhappily, does not admit of this; besides, the blacks are deprived of the means of instruction; who will take the pains to lead them into the way of salvation, and watch over them, that they may not stray, but the Methodists? Well, now their masters will not let them come to hear us. What is the personal liberty of the African, which he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul! How may it be compared?"[5] This was an honest but fatal expediency. Asbury took his bias from the preachers and planters of the South. It was the crisis of Methodist antislavery opinion. Steadily hereafter compromise and retrogression mark the policy of the Church, followed at last by fierce reaction controversy, schism, rebellion, and devastating war.

Capers's ministry in Charleston made a profound impression, and abated the public prejudice; for his social rank, as well as his superior culture and talents, commanded respect. He continued his itinerant labors, with increasing success, till the Conference of

[5] Asbury's Journals, iii, p. 298. The italics are his own.

1814, when, being now a married man, he deemed it expedient to locate. He procured a farm, cultivated it diligently on week-days, and preached on Sundays; but it was not long before his wife, of whom he was passionately fond, suddenly died in her new home. He felt that he had erred, that he must return to the itinerancy to suffer, whatever might be his lot. In 1818 he was readmitted to the Conference, and thenceforward never swerved from his work. His influence throughout the South, and throughout the denomination, became commanding. He was sent to the General Conference, and to England as representative of the American Church, appointed collegiate professor, and president, editor, missionary secretary, and at last, after the division of the denomination, elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which office he maintained with unremitted labor till his death in 1855.

He was five feet nine inches in stature, with delicately moulded features, expressive of uncommon refinement, intelligence, and benevolence. His eyes were black and lustrous, his voice musical; his manners marked by perfect amenity. In the pulpit he was usually mild, suasive, and instructive, occasionally exceedingly impressive and powerful. He seldom or never used formal "divisions" in his sermons, but maintained a central thought, which he thoroughly elaborated, but not without the freest digressions. He was a restless worker, and spent "a handsome patrimony for the Church," was often in want, and died without other resources than his ministerial salary. He was perhaps the most important, if not the most responsible, man in the division of the Church in 1844, an event which will hereafter require a further estimate of his historic relations to American Methodism.

Still another youth, destined to the episcopal office, was given to the itinerancy by the South the next year after that in which Capers entered the ministry. Beverly Waugh was born in Fairfax County, Va., in 1789, became a Methodist under the ministry of Dr. Thomas F. Sargent, in Alexandria, Va., in his fifteenth year, and joined the Baltimore Conference in 1809, when hardly twenty years old. His first two years in the ministry were spent on Virginia circuits, one of them among the mountains of the Greenbrier region, where he had the severest training of the itinerancy. In 1811 he was appointed to Washington, D. C., and thenceforward his solid abilities and high character secured him the most important positions of his Conference. He was repeatedly appointed to Washington, Baltimore, Georgetown, Frederick, etc., down to 1828, when the General Conference elected him Book Agent at New York, where he conducted, with ability and energy, the momentous publishing business of the Church for eight years. He had now become one of the prominent men of the denomination, not so much by brilliant or popular qualities, as by his well-balanced faculties, his consummate prudence, his exalted character, his devout temper, Christian amenity, and effective preaching. The Cincinnati General Conference of 1836 elected him to the episcopate, and for twenty-two years he sustained that most onerous office with extraordinary diligence, notwithstanding his precarious health, impaired by his labors in the Book Concern. He never failed, in a single instance, to attend his Conferences. These were years of stormy controversies in the Church, and he was worn and wan with care and fatigue. It has been estimated that the average number of ministerial appointments made by him per annum was five hundred

and fifty. The yearly redistribution of such a number of preachers and their families (for much of the time from Maine to Texas, from Michigan to Georgia) involved an amount of anxiety known only to the incumbents of the episcopate, and hardly known to them since that day. Meanwhile he was incessantly laboring in the pulpit, in class-meetings, and to no small extent in pastoral visitation, for wherever he stopped, for temporary rest, in his episcopal travels, he gave himself with devout earnestness to such opportunities. He suddenly died in his work, by disease of the heart, at Baltimore in 1858.

Beverly Waugh was both a good and an able man, and the Church suffers loss by the lack hitherto of any biographical record of his useful life, by which his historic services might be adequately appreciated. He was dignified in person, with calm, benign, though careworn features, brilliant eyes, shaded by heavy eyebrows, a voice of sonorous distinctness, and manners grave, but endearingly cordial and affectionate. He retained to the last the original plain costume of the ministry. In the pulpit he was often exceedingly powerful; in the episcopal chair prompt, without hurry; cautious, though firm. He was staunchly "conservative" in his opinions, not only of Methodistic principles and traditions, but of the public questions which kept the Church agitated with controversies during his episcopal administration, a fact which will give him prominence in the historical record of those memorable times.

John Davis joined the Baltimore Conference the year following Waugh's admission, and became, as his brethren testify, "a prince in Israel."[6] He was born in Northumberland County, Va., in 1787. His parents

[6] Minutes of 1854.

were Methodists of the primitive type, and trained him carefully in the doctrines of the Church. He attributed his conversion, in his nineteenth year, to the ineffaceable impression of a lesson of the Holy Scriptures, heard while sitting upon his father's knee while yet a child. "Ye must be born again," was a truth in that lesson which perpetually sounded in his conscience. It drew him, at last, to seek peace of mind in prayer, in a wood, where, after much anguish, he found it. He had never seen any one converted, nor witnessed an example of religious ecstacy; yet his new experience compelled him to "make the wood echo with the shout of 'Glory! glory! glory to God!'" He soon after began to "exhort," and in 1809 was called out by Hamilton Jefferson, presiding elder, to Berkeley Circuit. The next year he was received into the Conference. His earliest appointments were on rugged circuits of the western mountains; but he soon became eminent among his brethren, and occupied the most conspicuous stations in Baltimore, Washington, and elsewhere. He was presiding elder during many years; a delegate to the General Conference at every session, save two, after 1816, till his death, and a chief counselor there, though never given to speechmaking. He was a practical and effective preacher, and gathered into the Church hosts of members. In 1818 his labors in Baltimore were attended by an extraordinary religious impression, which resulted in the conversion of about a thousand souls in a few months. He was devoted to all the interests of his denomination, and especially labored for the endowment of Carlisle College. He persisted steadily in his itinerant career till his infirmities compelled him to retreat to the honored ranks of his "superannuated" brethren in 1846, and died in 1853, in the sixty-sixth

year of his age and the forty-fourth of his ministry, exclaiming, "Happy! happy! peaceful! Tell the Conference all is peace!"

In stature he was tall, slight, but vigorous. He was energetic in his movements, always appearing to have something to do. In familiar life he was exceedingly agreeable, a good converser, and given to anecdote, especially respecting the adventurous life of the primitive itinerancy. With his friend, Alfred Griffith, he was recognized by the Baltimore Conference as one of its chief sages and leaders. So sound was his judgment, that his clearly expressed opinion was usually deemed decisive of questions without further argument. He loved Methodism with an enthusiastic affection. In reviewing his long and self-sacrificing career late in life, he said to his family, "I would rather be a Methodist preacher, with the means of doing the little good I have done, than be the President of the United States."

Robert R. Roberts, whom we have heretofore found in the ultramontane woods of Pennsylvania, became a prominent laborer among these evangelists in 1808. He made his way this year to the General Conference at Baltimore, traveling on horseback, with but one dollar in his pocket for the journey, and carrying with him oats for his horse, and bread and cheese for himself. He had but five cents when he arrived at the session. His clothes were so worn out that an unknown Methodist of the city, after hearing him preach, sent a tailor to his lodgings, and had him reclothed from head to foot. His preaching produced such an impression that he was appointed to the Light-street Church immediately after the Conference, and remained there, and at Alexandria and Georgetown, till 1813, a powerful and

successful laborer. After three more years, spent in Philadelphia, and on its district, his superior character and capacity commanded such general regard that he was elected to the episcopate, and commenced his travels over all the United States. As the period draws to its close, names familiar and dear to us all nearly half a century later, begin to multiply, such as Tucker, Beard, Hamilton, Tippett, and others; within our present chronological limits they were graduating toward the orders of elders—modest young evangelists, trying their strength on hard circuits, but full of promise, and destined to afford the historian hereafter some of his choicest examples of events and characters.

Such are a few, and but a few, of the itinerants of the South in our present period—the second generation of Methodist itinerants—worthy recruits of the elder corps, which was still mighty in the field, led by Lee, Bruce, Roberts, Wells, Everett, Daniel Asbury, George, Reed, Snethen, Shinn, Henry Smith, Roszell, Christopher Sprye, Gassoway, Douglass, Mills, and similar men. Many others of equal note, but of scantier record, might be mentioned, some of whom will be noticed at more apposite points of our narrative.

CHAPTER III.

METHODISM IN THE SOUTH, 1804–1820: CONCLUDED.

Asbury's Last Visits to the South — His Episcopal Equipage — John Bond — Rembert Hall — Perry Hall — Last Interview with Otterbein — Asbury in Old Age — Ministerial Celibacy — Prosperity — Asbury's indomitable Persistence — Southern Methodism — Obituary Notices.

Asbury spent a portion of every winter of these years in the South. He made it an official visit every year of his episcopal life save one, and, including his prior excursion thither, traveled over more or less of its territory seventy times, including both trips to and from it, which were always on different routes. His journals have more than their wonted brevity during the present period, and are hardly capable of historical use. He was repeatedly accompanied by his colleagues, Whatcoat and M'Kendree, and habitually by an elder as traveling companion. Snethen, Hutchinson, Morrell, Jesse Lee, and Hitt had, thus far, successively attended him. Crawford, Boehm, French, and Bond were with him through the present journeys. He rode, most of the time, in an unpretentious carriage. On one occasion, accompanied by M'Kendree, in Georgia, he writes: "We are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise, in partnership, two bishops of us; but it must be confessed it tallies well with the weight of our purses. What bishops! But we hear great news, and we have great times, and each Western, Southern, and the Virginia Conference, will have one thousand souls converted

to God; and is not this an equivalent for a light purse? and are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes; glory be to God!" An ax was a necessary accompaniment to clear the roads. "O my excellent son, John Bond!" he exclaims in South Carolina; "a tree had fallen across our way; what was to be done? Brother Bond sprung to the ax fastened under our carriage, mounted upon the large limbs, hewing and hacking, stroke after stroke, without intermission, until he had cut away five of them, hauling them on one side as he severed them, so that we passed without difficulty. Is there his equal to be found in the United States? He drives me along with the utmost care and tenderness, he fills my appointments by preaching for me when I am disabled, he watches over me at night after the fatigue of driving all day, and if, when he is in bed and asleep, I call, he is awake and up in the instant to give me medicine, or to perform any other service his sick father may require of him, and this is done so readily, and with so much patience, when my constant infirmities and ill health require so many and oft-repeated attentions. The asthma presses sorely upon my panting breast. Lord, sanctify all my afflictions!"

The shadows of the evening of life were falling upon his great career, and his pensive allusions to the passing away of his old friends, and the changes of his old homes, increase in frequency and sadness with every year. "My old Virginia friends have disappeared from the earth!" he exclaims in 1805. He still finds yearly shelter at Rembert Hall, S. C.; but he buries members of the endeared household, and, in 1814, writes there, "How my friends move or waste away! yet I live; let me live every moment." This was his favorite home in the further south; at its north he always paused with

delight at Perry Hall; but this, too, now reminds him of the changes of life. In 1805 he says there, "At Perry Hall I spent a night; the house, spacious and splendid, was newly painted, and the little grandchildren were gay and playful; but I and the elders of the house felt that it was evening with us." In 1808 he "came to it as to a home in mourning." His old friend Harry Gough was dead, and he buried him with tears. The old home never ceased to be attractive, but was ever afterward desolate to the veteran traveler. In 1811 he preached to the family in their private chapel, and writes, "All to me seems yet to be in sackcloth here;" and as late as 1813 he says, "We came to Perry Hall. Alas, how solitary!"[1] His old friend Otterbein still lingers in Baltimore. "I gave," he writes the same year, "an evening to the great Otterbein. I found him placid and happy in God." Boehm was with them, and says "that was an evening I shall never forget. Two noble souls met, and their conversation was rich, and full of instruction. They had met frequently before. This was their last interview on

[1] "A few months ago, accompanied by the Rev. G. Haven, of the New England Conference, the writer visited the sites, only a few miles apart, of Cokesbury College and Perry Hall, both of which stately edifices, with their chapels and 'church-going bells,' were burned to the ground, the former seventy, the latter seventeen years ago. Perry Hall has been rebuilt, but without the addition of the chapel and its former elegance; yet, like its predecessor, it can still be seen afar off. The estate has been divided and sold, and now contains scarcely one third of its original acres, and the 'hall' is occupied by a 'stranger.' Many of its tall sentinels, like those whom they once guarded, have disappeared, either from decay or design, and those that remain resemble the straggling remnant of a decimated regiment. We entered its spacious apartments, some of which were entirely empty, others used merely for granaries or store-rooms. The prestige of the past, except by the power of association, was scarcely realized. No voice of thanksgiving or praise greeted our ear."—D. Creamer, Esq., in Ladies' Repository, p. 170. March, 1862.

earth." The good German divine was failing fast. The next year the bishop preached the "funeral sermon" of "the holy, the great Otterbein," as he calls him. "Solemnity," he says, "marked the silent meeting in the German Church, where were assembled the members of our Conference, and many of the clergy of the city. Forty years have I known the retiring modesty of this man of God, towering majestic above his fellows in learning, wisdom, and grace, yet seeking to be known only of God and the people of God. He had been sixty years a minister, fifty years a converted one."

His journals begin to show the decay of old age, though he is more cheerful than heretofore. The goodly fellowship of his episcopal colleagues and "traveling companions," and the increasingly eager welcomes of the Churches, which are almost everywhere crowded to hear him, can hardly fail to exhilarate him; but he becomes more punctilious and anxious about the great cause which has risen up under his labors. He fears its "temporal" prosperity; he criticizes severely slight deviations from traditional usage; he is alarmed at the sound of a bell in the cupola of a Methodist Church, and hopes "it will be the last one;" he dreads, above all, the marriage of the itinerants; it seems to him to menace almost fatally the whole ministry of Methodism in the new world. He is pleased to observe in the extreme South a prejudice in families against the marriage of their daughters with Methodist preachers, and says: "Thus involuntary celibacy is imposed upon us. All the better: care and anxiety about worldly possessions do not stop us in our course, and we are saved from the pollution of negro slavery and oppression." He rejoices to get into the Virginia Conference, where they are

nearly all inveterate celibates. At one of its sessions, (in 1809,) among eighty-four preachers present, only three had wives. "It was called," says Boehm, who was there, "the 'Bachelor Conference.' We had also bachelor bishops." M'Kendree was with Asbury. The latter "was delighted," adds Boehm, "with the appearance of the men. He said 'many of them are the most elegant young men I have ever seen in features, body, and mind; they are manly, and yet meek.'" He rejoices in the great prosperity of the Church. He averages its congregations at a thousand hearers each, for many in the South and West comprised the people for miles around the "appointments." He estimated the Methodist hearers in Georgia, in 1806, at one hundred and thirty thousand. "It is quite probable," he says, "we congregate two hundred thousand in each state on an average, and if to these we add those who hear us in the two Canadian provinces, and in the Mississippi and Indiana territories, it will perhaps be found that we preach to four millions of people. What a charge!"

Asbury's maladies are still inveterate, and he moves on only by the indomitable force of his will. In 1805 he writes: "My eyes fail. I must keep them for the Bible and the Conferences." Boehm, with him in the far South in 1812, says: "Never was he more feeble, never less able to travel, and yet he would go on. There was only one thing that could stop him—the pale horse and his rider. Having lost the use of one of his feet by rheumatism, I had to carry him in my arms and place him in his sulky, and then take him out and carry him into a church or private dwelling, and he would sit and preach. At Fayetteville I carried him into the church, and he preached from Zech. ix, 12

'the stronghold.' After the sermon he ordained three persons. He had one blister on him, and I carried him to our host, who put on three more. He traveled in great misery. At Wilmington I carried him into church, and he preached in the morning, and then met the society; and, that not being enough for a sick old infirm bishop, he would preach again in the evening. After this he was in such misery that a poultice was applied to mitigate his pain. The next day we rode twenty-four miles. The bishop's feet were so swollen he could not wear a shoe. Almost any other man would have been in bed; but he loved his work better than his life. His record on that day is, 'I have a fever and swelled feet.' The next day, 'I suffer violent pain in my right foot;' and yet he says, 'I have filled all my appointments, and answered the letters received.' Who else would have thus persevered amid pain and anguish, dying by inches, to accomplish so much work?" His unparalleled career was drawing toward its close: but we shall follow him yet through many journies in the North, the East, the West, though with but indistinct glimpses.

These were years of rife religious excitement through most of the South. The camp-meeting, of the West, was generally introduced, and from Bassett's Woods, in Delaware, to Rembert's, in South Carolina, and far beyond, in Georgia, these great occasions were of almost continual occurrence, attended sometimes, says Asbury, by ten thousand people, and three hundred traveling and local preachers. A thousand conversions in a week are sometimes recorded of a single meeting. A pervasive influence went forth from them through the circuits and districts, and Methodism spread into almost every city, town, and settlement of the South. The

annual Conferences were often held at or near the camps, and the arrival of Asbury, sometimes with M'Kendree or Whatcoat, always with an able "travel ing companion," and usually with a retinue of other preachers gathered on his route, became a sort of spiritual ovation, a triumphal march of the great leader, which put in motion the Methodist hosts all along his progress. The great man had become now a wonder to the nation, a hoary captain, with such a prestige as no other clergyman of the western hemisphere could claim. He had led his people to victory in all the land. His whole American life had been heroic, and now, tottering with years, he was as invincible in the field as ever. There was no faltering in his course. His character and example were a marvelous power. The people felt that a cause thus providentially conducted could not fail, but would probably take the whole country. The itinerants especially could not but grow strong in the presence of such a man. His continual passages among them inspirited them to emulate his wondrous energy. They almost universally took a chivalric character, a military *esprit de corp*, which kept them compactly united, exultant in labor, and defiant of persecution and peril. It may be doubted whether the Christian world ever saw a more laborious, more powerful, more heroic, or more successful band of evangelists than the Methodist itinerants who were now traversing the South from Chesapeake Bay to the Mexican Gulf. We are not therefore surprised that their communicants numbered, at the close of these years, more than ninety thousand; that they had gained rapidly, not only through the rural districts, but in all the cities, nearly trebling their numbers in Baltimore, nearly doubling them in Washington, more than doubling them in Richmond and

Charleston, and gathering all they yet had in Savannah. Baltimore Conference now enrolled 33,289, Virginia 23,756, South Carolina 32,969.

The obituary roll of the South for this period includes many names which, though obscured by time, should not be allowed to die. Among them is that of Benjamin Jones, who, in 1804, fell dead in a swamp on the Waccamaw Lake, a man "of solemnity of countenance and manners, deeply serious, of a gentle mind, and Christian spirit." In the same year Nicholas Watters, worthy of his historic family, a laborer from Pennsylvania to Georgia, "a man of courage," "ready in conversation," of "gracious temper" and "simple manners," who died in Charleston, S. C., exclaiming, "I am not afraid to die, thanks be to God!" In 1805 John Durbin, of Maryland, who expired shouting, "Jesus! Jesus! angels! angels! I'll go." In 1807 George Dougharty, the persecuted hero, whose death we have heretofore recorded. The same year Bennet Kendrick, of whom the Minutes say, "What pen can write his worth? Worthy to supply the place of Dougharty; but, alas! we are deprived of them both, not in one year only, but within thirteen days of each other. The poor Africans repeat his name, and speak of his death with tears. He was a willing servant to slaves for the sake of Christ." He was "studious and skillful in the word," and "ended in triumph." The next year Henry Willis, who has been often noticed as one of the greatest men of the itinerancy, an evangelist from New York to Charleston and the West, and who died in Maryland, "with triumphant faith in Christ." Also Edmund Henley, a native of North Carolina, a laborer in the western mountains and southern low country. Expecting death, he hastened from his circuit to his father's house, erected

a stand at the graveyard, preached from it his own funeral sermon to his old neighbors and friends, and was soon after buried there. "Several years he professed sanctification and the full assurance of hope," and was "very circumspect in his walk." The ruling passion was strong with him in death. He became delirious, "but would shout and pray, exhort and praise God to the last." The same year Leonard Cassell, of German parentage, born in the neighborhood of Strawbridge's Chapel, on Pipe Creek, the Summerfield of his times; of "astonishing genius," a "happy model of pulpit simplicity, eloquence, and piety, which shone with astonishing luster." The "loss of no young man in the connection," say his brethren, "could be more deservedly lamented." Like Nicholas Watters, and many other itinerants, he fell a victim to the epidemic yellow fever, which he bravely confronted at his last post in Baltimore, and died "with unbroken confidence in God." In 1809 the veteran Joseph Everett, in Maryland, shouting, "Glory! glory! glory!" In 1810 Moses Black, of South Carolina, who, dying, requested his attendants to open his chamber windows, and, looking out, said, "Behold, how beautiful everything looks; I shall soon go now," and immediately closed his eyes forever, in "great peace and tranquillity." In 1811 Samuel Mills, "grave," "plain in dress and diet, a strict disciplinarian, visiting from house to house," "a witness of sanctification," of "strong confidence in God, and frequently shouting his praise." Also Nathan Weedon, of Virginia, a man of "peculiarities," of great afflictions, suffering by agonies in the head, and at last by blindness, but persisting in his labors till he fell declaring, "I am not afraid to die." In 1812 Jesse Pinnell, of Virginia, "of blameless and harmless character,"

dying of consumption, he testified, as long as "he could whisper, that he was happy, happy." Jacob Rumph, of South Carolina, "abstemious, steady, studious;" a strict "disciplinarian," "dead to the world;" "difficult to persuade to receive any pecuniary aid from the Church;" distinguished by his devotion to the religious welfare of children, with whom he was greatly successful. On his last sacramental occasion he said: "This day the Lord hath enabled me to be perfectly willing to die in Charleston," where he soon after expired with "the smiles of peace and confidence on his countenance." Jesse Brown, of Virginia, "a witness of perfect love," and "praising God while he had breath." In 1813 Leroy Merritt, also a Virginian, of great "zeal and simplicity, studious and successful;" attacked with fever on his circuit, he hastened to a Methodist family in Portsmouth, Va., saying that he had "come to die with them;" they took him in, ministered to him to the last, and witnessed his triumphant departure, as he exclaimed, "I have gained the victory! Come, Lord, come! I am ready to go! Glory, glory, glory! Roll on eternity, eternity! Roll on ages, ages, ages!" In 1815 Joel Arrington, a North Carolinian, who died "with strong confidence and full assurance of the promises." Nathan Lodge, a Virginian, a man of great purity and fidelity, who died speechless, but tranquil and safe. Zecharia Witten, testifying, "I leave the world without trouble or sorrow." In 1816 Ewen Johnson, a North Carolinian, a faithful and useful laborer, of "a humble and timid spirit," "nevertheless persevering, zealous, studious," "wholly given up to the ministry;" he lost his speech before death, but retained his senses; "he arose, fell upon his knees, clasped his hands," and, though without utterance, appeared to be rapt with "the divine presence." James Quail, of

Maryland, "eminent for piety and diligence," and dying "with great peace of mind." In 1817 Samuel Waggoner, of North Carolina, who, sinking under consumption, returned to his father's house, and died "in full assurance of faith." Peter Wyatt, of Virginia, who worn out by labor and disease at Norfolk, died on a journey for health, in a Methodist family of Nansemond County, where he had found himself too weak to proceed further; in a swoon his attendants wept around him, supposing him to be dead; but he revived, and said, "Weep not for me;" spoke of the blessedness of the righteous, and, "laying his hands upon his breast, died without a struggle." William Patridge, of Virginia, who died in Georgia, exclaiming, "for me to die is gain;" an eminently holy man, "who," say the old Minutes, "respected the rights of man with a nicety never surpassed," and "though surrounded by those who held slaves, would have none." Anthony Senter, of North Carolina, "as a Christian, without offense," when nearly unable to speak, by consumption, he still traveled from circuit to circuit as presiding elder, and assembled the official members of his charge to instruct them in their duties; unable at last to go on, he lay down and died in the full peace of the gospel. Henry Padgett, of Maryland, who departed, shouting, "O death, welcome death! Farewell. I bid you all farewell. I shall not be dead, but living. O yes; living in heaven!" In 1818 Fletcher Harris, of North Carolina, a young man of eminent promise and holiness, who died "shouting aloud the praises of God." A few days before his death, being supported in his bed, he preached his farewell sermon to his friends, "shook hands with all around, bidding them an affectionate farewell," and then said, "Glory to God! victory! vic-

tory! This is not dying, it is living forever. Tell the preachers at Conference that I died in the triumphs of faith; that my last doctrine is *free* salvation." Joseph Stone, an Englishman, who, "in the midst of excruciating pains, praised the Lord aloud, and clapped his hands, exclaiming, 'Glory! glory! glory!'" the last words he was heard to utter distinctly. In 1819 Thomas Lucas, of Maryland, a great sufferer, who died in peace. John Wesley Bond, of Baltimore, the faithful traveling companion of Asbury, who had "great affliction and distress of mind" when near death; but "the conflict soon closed in peace and triumph." John T. Brame, of Virginia, "thrust sorely at by the enemy of souls" on his deathbed, being delirious with fever, but "the voice of prayer" from his brethren "never failed to call him to his right mind;" at last, while some of them were on their knees around him, "light broke into his soul," and "he continued in ecstasy and triumph" till death. George Burnett, of Virginia, "in full assurance of a blessed immortality." In 1820 Charles Dickinson, of North Carolina, a humble but useful laborer, who, bidding farewell to his friends, said, "Surely the Lord is here!" and, "without a groan or a sigh, closed his own eyes, folded his hands," and died. Also Archibald Robinson, of North Carolina, who expired after a sickness in which "he was so filled with divine love, that his cup ran over, and he continued praising God till his strength was almost exhausted." And thus, after triumphant lives and labors, these good men had triumphant deaths.

CHAPTER IV.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES, 1804–1820.

Condition of the Church — Camp-meetings — John Emory — He forsakes the Bar for the Pulpit — Emory's further Career and Character — Jacob Gruber tried for opposing Slavery — Garrettson and Ware — Marvin Richardson — A Camp-meeting — Nathan Bangs — Heman Bangs — Robert Seney — Samuel Luckey — Origin of the African Methodist Episcopal Church — Richard Allen becomes a Bishop — Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church — Methodism up the Hudson — In Troy — Noah Levings "Exhorting" — Albany — Schenectady — Ministerial Reinforcements.

The maturer fields of the Church, in the middle and northern states, had almost continual prosperity during the present period. It was a time of church building, in which the primitive temporary structures began to give place to more commodious but hardly more pretentious edifices; of local growth, in membership and influence, and of rapid and important accessions to the ministry. But these sections had not much frontier work, except in Western New York and Canada, and, therefore, fewer of those salient events, which still marked the progress of the denomination in the South and West, and to some extent in the yet reluctant states of New England. Their published records continue to be singularly scanty in historical data. Men now entered the itinerancy, whose names are familiar through the whole Church, but who are known only by vague traditions of their pulpit eloquence and great

usefulness, and the meager allusions or brief obituaries of the Conference Minutes.[1]

Beginning the period with forty thousand four hundred and fifteen members, the two Conferences of this region ended it with three Conferences and eighty-two thousand two hundred and fifty-four members. They had more than doubled their numerical strength. In 1810 they detached a large and thriving portion of their territory, and formed of it the Genesee Conference, under which has grown up the flourishing Methodism of interior and Western New York. Steady progress was made in the principal cities. Philadelphia nearly doubled its communicants, notwithstanding it lost some thirteen hundred by the secession of its colored members under Richard Allen. New York more than trebled its members, though it also lost nearly a thousand by a similar African schism in 1819, and three hundred more the next year by a secession of whites under William M. Stillwell, the founder of the "Stillwellites," a faction which has utterly dwindled away. Great revivals had prevailed there, especially in 1808 and 1809, adding nearly six hundred members in the two years, so that in 1810 two new churches were erected, those of Allen and Bedford streets, both of which became fountain-heads of Methodism for the whole city. John-street was also rebuilt before the period closed, (in 1817, and rededicated January 4, 1818;) its old timbers were used in the construction of another church, at the "Two-Mile Stone," from which sprung Seventh-street Church. The other chief cities were still mostly heads of circuits, and have not distinct enough returns in the Minutes for the estimation

[1] Bangs, though his narrative is in the form of Annals, could give hardly a half score strictly local facts of the middle states for all these years.

of their progress, but their circuits show generally large gains. It was a time of almost universal revivals, and especially of successful camp meetings; checked somewhat by the war with Great Britain, but only temporarily, for the energy of Methodism had now become irrepressible. Asbury, in the summer of 1807, wrote: "I have good reasons to believe that upon the Eastern Shore four thousand have been converted since the first of May, and one thousand sanctified, besides souls convicted and quickened and restored. Our Pentecost for sanctification is fully come in some places. Ten camp-meetings north of New York in about two months, and more laid out. Now, I think, we congregate two millions in a year, and I hope for one hundred thousand souls converted, convicted, restored, or sanctified. The whole continent is awake. I am on a route of three thousand miles from and to Baltimore. Such a work of God, I believe, never was known for the number of people."

Among the eminent men who entered the ministry in this period none attained a more important historical position in the middle states than John Emory, born in Queen Anne County, Md., 1789. His parents were Methodists, and belonged to the best class of the community. They trained him strictly in their faith, and from his childhood he maintained an unsullied character. In his seventeenth year he joined the Church, a consecrated youth. He was classically educated, and early devoted himself to the profession of the law. At the time he abandoned its ambitious hopes of wealth and honor for the Methodist itinerancy hardly any young man in his native state had more flattering prospects. An inflexible will, the most assiduous habits of study and application, thorough manliness and uprightness, remarkable self-possession, clearness, and compre-

hensiveness of mind, readiness of speech, in a style of equal perspicuity and vigor, and an extraordinary logical faculty, marked him as a man to whom success was beyond any other hazard than that of life itself. He was not eligible to the bar, according to usage, till his majority, but was admitted two years earlier, and soon had, says one of his legal contemporaries, "every prospect of wealth and fame"[2] by a successful practice. "Had he continued," says another of his legal colleagues, "he would have attained a most conspicuous eminence." In these times, more than in ours, the law was the highway to political distinction, and John Emory could have hopefully aimed at the highest places of public power and fame, but his luminous mind saw the superior honor of an apostolic life of labor and suffering, and the "glory which shall follow." He turned away from his professional prospects. The self-denial cost him a fearful struggle. He lost his religious comfort before he yielded; but in 1809 he made a "covenant," wrote and signed it, to give up the law and preach the gospel. "The moment," he says, "I entered into this covenant on my knees, I felt my mind relieved, and the peace and love of God flow through my soul, and ever since I have enjoyed closer communion with him than ever before." His father, though a pious man, persistently opposed his resolution, refused him a horse with which to begin his itinerant career, and refused for two years to hear him preach, or to receive letters from him. Borrowing a horse from a friend, he went forth, however, and traveled, "under the presiding elder," till the session of the Philadelphia Conference in 1810, when he was received into its membership, and sent to Caroline

[2] Life of Rev. John Emory, D. D. By his eldest son, p. 43. New York, 1841.

Circuit, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. His father at last became reconciled to his course, encouraged his labors, and, when dying, sent for him to attend and console his last hours.

From 1810 to 1813 young Emory rode circuits, but never afterward. He was ready for the hardest service; and when Asbury, in 1812, called for volunteers for Canada, he offered himself for that difficult field, as also for the West. But his peculiar talents fitted him for other work. In 1813 he was appointed to the Academy (Union) Station in Philadelphia.

In 1815 he was appointed to Wilmington, Del.; in 1816, reappointed to Union Church in Philadelphia, and the same year was elected a delegate to the General Conference. It was the first session to which he was eligible, and there was no subsequent session during his life in which he was not a delegate, except that of 1824, when, being in the minority in his Conference on a disputed question, he was not elected. In 1817 he first appeared as an author by "A Reply" to an essay of Bishop White, entitled "Objections against the Position of a Personal Assurance of the Pardon of Sin by a direct Communication of the Holy Spirit." The doctrine assailed is vital in Methodist theology, and Emory defended it with an ability which fully disclosed his capacity for the future literary service of the Church. He wrote a "Further Reply." The two pamphlets were noticed by White in a review of the whole question, with which the controversy closed. In 1818 he was stationed in Washington city, where also he issued, in a local controversy, a pamphlet entitled "The Divinity of Christ Vindicated," etc. In 1820 he was sent as representative of his Church to the British Conference; in 1824 appointed Book Agent, with Nathan Bangs;

and in 1832 elected bishop, positions which identify him with important questions and advancements of the Church. In them all he showed the qualities of an extraordinary man, down to his sudden death in 1835, when he was found, bleeding and insensible, on the highway, having been thrown out of his carriage on his route from his home to Baltimore. He died the same day without the restoration of his consciousness.

In person he was below the ordinary size, slight, not weighing over one hundred and twenty-five pounds, but well proportioned, and erect. His features were expressive of tranquil thoughtfulness, firmness, and kindliness. He was long a sufferer from gastric ailments, but was a persevering worker, a thorough student, an early riser, and rigorously systematic. Down to his day the Church had not possessed a more scholarly, a better trained, intellect. He was pre-eminent as a debater in Conferences, especially in the General Conference, and his legal skill solved for it some of its most difficult legislative problems. Withal he was remarkably versatile, and successful in all that he attempted. His writings in defense of his denomination, both its theology and polity, were always authoritative and conclusive. His piety was profound, steady, yet fervent. He saw in his own Church the mightiest system of agencies for the evangelization, not only of the new world, but of the whole world, that Christendom afforded, and he consecrated himself entirely to the development and application of its forces.

Jacob Gruber's labors in this period down to 1814 were beyond the western mountains, but after one year more, spent in Baltimore, he had charge of the Carlisle

District, Penn., which reached into Maryland. In the latter state he held a camp-meeting in 1818, at which he preached before three thousand hearers against slavery, no very uncommon thing among the leaders of the early itinerancy; but a warrant was issued, and he was arrested at one of his quarterly meetings. The grand jury, at Hagerstown, Md., produced an indictment against him, and in 1819 he was solemnly tried for felony in the Frederick County Court.[3] The case produced general excitement, especially among the Methodists, now eminently influential in the state. Many of his chief ministerial brethren, especially Roszell and Snethen, zealously sustained him. Ignatius Pigman, once an itinerant, now an eloquent lawyer, and local preacher; Roger B. Taney, afterward chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and two other lawyers, were employed to defend him. Hon. J. Buchanan, chief judge, Hon. A. Shriver, and Hon. T. Buchanan, associate judges, composed the court. The trial proceeded with intense public interest. Roger B. Taney's addresses were eloquent and conclusive. He justly affirmed that the Methodist Church "has steadily in view the abolition of slavery;" that "no slaveholder is allowed to be a minister in it;" that its "preachers are accustomed to speak of the injustice and oppression of slavery;" that "nobody could doubt the opinion of Gruber on the subject;" and he "fully vindicated Gruber and his Church in this opinion and policy." "Slavery," continued the distinguished lawyer, "is a blot on our national character, and every real lover of freedom confidently hopes that it will be effectually, though it must be gradually, wiped away, and earnestly looks for the means by which this necessary object may be best

[3] Strickland reports the case quite fully. "Life of Gruber," p. 130

attained. And until it shall be accomplished, until the time shall come when we can point without a blush to the language held in the Declaration of Independence, every friend of humanity will seek to lighten the galling chain of slavery, and better, to the utmost of his power, the wretched condition of the slave." Citizens of the United States had occasion, in later years, to recall these utterances when the speaker sat on the supreme bench of the nation. The jury, after a few minutes' retirement, pronounced a verdict of "not guilty." Gruber, hearing that the "trial" was to be published in a pamphlet, addressed a letter to its editor for publication with it, arguing the subject bravely, and at considerable length. "Some," he wrote, "have been in hopes that I have learned a useful lesson in my trial; but whatever I have learned, I can assure you I have not yet learned to call good evil, or evil good. I hope while I keep my senses I shall consider involuntary perpetual slavery miserable injustice, a system of robbery and theft. I hope I never shall rank men, women, and children with horses and cows and property, and countenance or justify such sales and merchandise. May our merciful God save us from this sin and reproach, and let every honest man say amen." This was well said in the circumstances, but it was nothing extraordinary for a Methodist preacher of that day to say it. He went forthwith to the session of his Conference at Alexandria, D. C., and was appointed for the ensuing year to Frederick Circuit, named after, and comprehending, the town in which he had been tried.

Freeborn Garrettson labored strenuously in all this period in the middle states, mostly on the Hudson, in stations from New York city to Rhinebeck, but much of the time as Conference missionary, an appointment

which allowed him to circulate at large among the Churches. His venerable character, as a founder of the denomination, made him everywhere welcome, and his power and unction as a preacher revivified the societies generally. During some of these years he again commanded the large New York District, leading a host of the ablest men of the northern ministry. Toward the close of the period he was among the supernumeraries, but with hardly diminished labors.

Thomas Ware, worn by protracted labors in the hardest fields of the Church, continued to travel down to 1809, part of the time in New Jersey District, (comprehending the whole state,) and part in Philadelphia, where his health failed, and compelled him to retire till 1811, when he was again at work at Lancaster, till the General Conference of 1812 appointed him to the Book Concern, where, during four years, he did valuable service for the publishing interests of the Church. From 1816 to 1825 he was again abroad as an itinerant, but in the latter year was compelled by age to retreat into the "ineffective ranks," after forty years of service in almost all parts of the country accessible in his times.

Marvin Richardson, born in Stephentown, N. Y., 1789, was awakened at the old Sands-street Church, Brooklyn, in 1805, and, in the next year, converted at a camp-meeting held at Tuckahoe, Westchester County William Thatcher presided over this gathering, and Asbury and a host of preachers were present. It was an extraordinary occasion. Asbury said that it exceeded any camp-meeting he had ever attended. "From it," writes Richardson, "revivals spread east, west, north, and south; the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon the city of New York in an unusual

manner. Under the faithful labors of Aaron Hunt, Trueman Bishop, Seth Crowell, Freeborn Garrettson, and John Wilson, many were led to Christ, and among the number, to my great joy, our whole family, consisting of father, mother, three brothers, and three sisters, found peace with God, and connected themselves with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Brooklyn also, where were stationed Ezekiel Cooper and Samuel Thomas, shared largely in the refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Many were added to the Church, and out of the number two became preachers, namely, Josiah Bowen and myself. These were indeed happy and joyous days, sweetened as they were by the delights of Christian fellowship. We were truly of one heart and of one mind."[4]

In 1808 Ostrander announced him to preach in Brooklyn without his knowledge. With great diffidence and agitation he thus began, when but nineteen years old, his long and successful itinerant life. The same year he was called out by his presiding elder to the Croton Circuit. Thomas Thorp, later a useful preacher, was one of the fruits of his first sermon on this circuit; yet such was the self-distrust of the young evangelist, that he determined to give up preaching, and return home, when Woolsey met him, and by urgent and fatherly admonitions forced him back to the circuit. A second time he attempted to retreat, but his colleague, Isaac Candee, met him on his homeward route, and again turned him back. He was received into the Conference in 1809, and sent three hundred miles to Charlotte Circuit in Vermont, along the shores of Lake Champlain. He went to it on horseback, carrying his clothing and books, all that he possessed, in his portmanteau.

[4] MS. autobiography.

He had formidable labors on his circuit, but was sustained by a "powerful revival in Middlebury, Vt.," which so strengthened the Church there as to enable it to become a "station." Two hundred souls were added to the membership of the circuit.

During the remainder of these years he was appointed to Granville, Mass., Buckland, Mass., Dutchess, N. Y., New Haven, Conn., New York city, Jamaica, L. I., Middletown, Conn., New Rochelle, N. Y. On some of his circuits he suffered severely, receiving but little salary, sometimes hardly enough to buy clothing for the year, having poor fare, impaired health, and terrible exposures in winter, with "face, hands, and feet frozen;" but he was faithful to his charge, and, as his future appointments will show, became one of the representative men of the New York Conference. He was called the "finest looking" member of that body — in person well-proportioned and dignified, with an expressive face, simple but most courteous manners, of few words, extreme modesty, great prudence in counsel, and a tranquil uniformity of temper and life—the perfect Christian gentleman, and unblemished Christian minister. "The oldest member of the New York Conference," says one of his brethren, "he has attended fifty-eight of its annual sessions, having never failed of one of them, and being forty-two years 'effective.' For the last sixteen years he has been superannuated. He is now seventy-eight years old, but is still remarkable for his noble personal appearance, agreeable manners, sweetness of spirit, and firmness of character. He has held a place in the front rank of his Conference, and in the regards of the people." [5]

[5] Letter of Rev. John Campbell, of New York Conference, to the Author. 1867.

In 1808 Nathan Bangs returned from Canada, and was appointed to Delaware Circuit, N. Y., where, among many other fruitful incidents of his ministry, was the reception into the Church of his brother, Heman Bangs, whose faithful and vigorous services in the itinerancy have continued to our own day. "He was esteemed," writes the latter, "a powerful preacher. I remember that at a quarterly meeting, after the presiding elder had preached, he rose and began to exhort. In a few minutes the power of his word was like an electrical shock, and the whole assembly rose simultaneously to their feet. He had a notion that it was my duty to preach, and wrote me a long letter about it, especially cautioning me not to marry, as that would interfere with the itinerant work. I was fearful myself that I should have to preach, but determined not to do so if I could avoid it, and yet save my soul. I was willing to be a local preacher, but not an itinerant. I drew the inference from his letter that a wife would be a sure barrier to the traveling ministry, so I determined to marry as soon as I could, and did take a wife three months after I was twenty-one years old. His letter so vexed me that I would not read it a second time for a long while, and yet I thought so much of it that I kept it for fifty years, but it is now mislaid. Nathan and myself have ever lived in sweet fellowship. Independent in our own opinions, we often differed, but never quarreled. He afforded me many profitable reflections by judicious criticisms when I was young in the ministry." Heman Bangs joined the Conference in 1815, and became one of its strongest men. Tall, robust, of powerful voice, and more powerful brain, an incessant preacher, and able disciplinarian, assiduously devoted not only to the perfunctory labors of the ministry, but

to all the philanthropic undertakings of the Church; a man of fervent zeal, of great practical sense, of good humor, and no little adroitness, he has been one of the most successful Methodist preachers of the last half century.

Nathan Bangs occupied important posts during these years: Albany Circuit, New York city, and Rhinebeck and New York Districts. His pen was busy in publications in defense of Methodism, and, with Emory, he was now beginning the literature of American Methodism. He was greatly useful in New York city from 1810 to 1812. Methodism had one circuit in the city, with but little more than two thousand members, when he began there. A profound religious interest prevailed during both years of his appointment. More than two hundred and fifty members were added to the Church by the close of the first, and nearly one hundred and fifty more by the close of the second. On the Rhinebeck District he had almost continual revivals. His quarterly meetings were especially effective, assembling great hosts of Methodists and their neighbors from all the country around, and sending out quickening influences over the circuits. He begun that liberal provision of Churches and parsonages which has dotted the whole region of the old Rhinebeck District with Methodist edifices; a chapel and a preacher's house in almost every village. He reformed the finances of the circuits, insisting on a better support of the ministry. By the end of his four years on the district its nine appointments had increased to thirteen, its nineteen preachers to twenty-five, and it had gained nearly a thousand members. Besides this numerical success, nearly all its economical interests had improved; chapels and parsonages were springing up all over its

territory. Methodism had, in fine, secured in this extensive region not only a lodgment, but a strength which no subsequent adversities have been able to shake. The district has since received the title of "the garden of Methodism." "In all that region of country," writes one of his preachers,[6] "no one stood higher in public esteem. Quarterly meetings were great occasions, calling out vast multitudes, many of them from a distance of thirty or forty miles. No church edifice would begin to accommodate the crowds of people, and in the summer season an orchard or grove frequently served as our temple of worship, and mighty displays of awakening and saving power were often witnessed under the fervid and heart-searching preaching of our presiding elder."

He led many a useful laborer into the ministry during his presiding eldership in these years, some of whom were to take historical rank in the Church, though at a date too late for present notice. It was toward the close of this period that he called out Robert Seney, his lifelong, and perhaps his dearest friend, one of the first three graduates of college in the ministry, a man who sacrificed the profession of the law and high social rank for the heroism of the itinerancy, which he maintained for more than thirty years; "an excellent general scholar," writes Bangs, "a well-read theologian," a successful preacher in the most important appointments of New York Conference, a staunch friend, a perfect Christian gentleman; of extraordinary memory, intuitive discernment of character, rare humor and profound modesty. It may be doubted whether Bangs's usefulness during these years was, in any other respect,

[6] Rev. Dr. Fitch Reed, who began his ministry on this district in 1815.

greater than in his success in recruiting the ministry with similar men.

In 1810 Samuel Luckey, then in his twentieth year, was called out by Henry Stead, his presiding elder, to supply a vacancy on Montgomery Circuit, N. Y., which comprised between thirty and forty appointments in schoolhouses, barns, cottages, and workshops, requiring about three hundred miles ride in four weeks, and almost daily preaching. In 1811 he was received by the New York Conference, and sent to Ottawa, in Canada. He made his way as best he could to Montreal, and thence fifty or sixty miles, through the French settlements, to his circuit. He was thus, in the very outset, thrown upon the heroic tests of the early itinerancy. He carried with him a few text-books in theology, and in the Latin and Greek languages, and there, in the wilds of the far North, began that course of faithful public service, which has identified his name with the history of the Church for more than half a century. As circuit preacher, presiding elder, principal of Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, at Lima., N. Y., from 1832 to 1836; editor of the Book Concern from 1836 to 1840, regent of the State University of New York for many years, chaplain to the charitable institutions of Rochester, where he still survives, and preaches thrice every Sunday, he has done an amount of public labor hardly surpassed by any of his contemporaries in the ministry. Self-educated, beyond the average culture of his early ministerial associates, steadfastly devoted to his work, of vigorous health even in old age, a successful preacher, a participant in many General Conferences, and in almost every enterprise of his Church, he has contributed greatly to its prosperity, not only in the state of New York, but throughout the country.

While Dr. Emory was in charge of the Union Station, Philadelphia, in 1814, he had a reluctant agency in the events which gave rise to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. An unchristian public opinion had always repelled and oppressed the free men of color, North as well as South. With all its devotion to their religious welfare, Methodism had not dared to fully recognize their Christian parity in its congregations, and thousands of its African members, gradually advancing under its care in intellectual and moral improvement, justly felt the disabling and humiliating disparagement. As early as 1787 some of them, in Philadelphia, convened to consider their grievances. Withdrawing from the Church, they undertook to build a chapel for themselves, and Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, ordained a colored preacher for them. Richard Allen, once a southern slave, but self-redeemed, had become wealthy, and influential among his people in Philadelphia, and, in 1793, erected for them a church on his own land, which was dedicated by Asbury, and named Bethel. In 1799 Allen was ordained a deacon, as we have noticed, and in 1800 the General Conference made provision for the ordination of colored men in similar cases. Allen and his brethren had entered in 1796 into an engagement, by a "charter," to remain under the disciplinary regulations of the Church, and the jurisdiction of a white elder, appointed in the Philadelphia Conference; but contentions soon arose respecting their relations to the Conference; an appeal was made to the law, and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania responded in favor of the Bethel Society. They thus became independent. Emory in 1814 addressed to them a circular letter, announcing that the white preachers could no longer maintain pastoral

responsibility for them.[7] They called a general convention of colored Methodists in April, 1816, to organize a denomination; and "taking into consideration their grievances, and in order to secure their privileges and promote union among themselves, it was resolved that the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and all other places, who should unite with them, should become one body under the name and style of the 'African Methodist Episcopal Church.'" Thus arose the most important Protestant body of Africans in the United States, or indeed in the world. Later events in our national history indicate that it was a providential provision, and it depends only on its leading minds, under God, to secure to it a sublime mission and destiny among the liberated African population of the nation. It adopted substantially the Discipline and Doctrines of the parent body, modified by lay representation through the local preachers. Allen was elected bishop by its General Conference in 1816, and consecrated by five regularly ordained ministers, one of whom was a presbyter of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He died in 1831; but the denomination has had a succession of able superintendents, some of whom have been remarkable for administrative talent and pulpit eloquence. Of its eight bishops, three of whom have died, all were slaves except one. One of them, Willis Nazrey, has episcopal charge of the Colored British Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, now an independent body. In the United States they have (in 1867) ten Conferences, 550 preachers, including five bishops, but exclusive of

[7] In the preface to their Discipline they say he declared them "disowned by the Methodists." His letter was temperate and kindly, and simply stated the facts of the case as affected by the charter and the laws of the Church.

1,500 local preachers, and about 200,000 members, seven eighths of whom live in the southern states. They have Church property to the amount of four millions of dollars, a Book Concern in Philadelphia, a weekly newspaper, and a college in Ohio.[8] A later organization of colored Methodists has also acquired some importance, reporting more than 90,000 members, with about 400 traveling and many local preachers. It sprung indirectly from the "Allenite" secession. The latter established a congregation in New York city, over which their bishop appointed a colored local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, first giving him ordination. There were about eight hundred and forty Africans in the city Methodist Churches in 1818, but in 1821 only sixty-one remained. A schism had been working during the interval by the influence of Allen's congregation, but it became hostile to his jurisdiction, and resulted in the second African Methodist Episcopal Church, distinguished usually by the prefix "Zion," as the first usually is by that of "Bethel," taken from the titles of their original Churches in the respective cities. The two denominations are quite distinct, though maintaining cordial relations with each other.

As these bodies differ in no fundamental respect from the parent Church, and as a difference of the human skin can be no justifiable reason for a distinction in Christian communion, the time may come when the parent Church may have the opportunity of making an impressive demonstration against absurd conventionalism, and in favor of the sublime Christian doctrine of the essential equality of all good men in the kingdom of

[8] Memorial to the General Conference of the M. E. Church, South. 1866. See Meth. Quart. Rev., 1866, p. 438 New York.
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God, by receiving back to its shelter, without invidious or discriminative terms, these large masses of the American people, and by sharing with them its abundant resources for the elevation of their race. Such an act would seem to be the necessary consummation of that revolution of public opinion which has been providentially effected by the great war of the rebellion.

Methodism continued to extend up the Hudson through all this period. Its long depressed prospects in Troy began to brighten, and as early as 1809 a small chapel was erected in State-street, its only one for a score of years.[9] In 1810 it is first reported as a station under Dr. Phoebus. The next year it was again merged in an adjoining circuit; but, in 1813, Laban Clark had charge of it as a station. In 1815 Tobias Spicer preached there with great succes. A revival prevailed about two years. He reported two hundred and fifty communicants, and doubled the membership. During his ministry a young man by the name of Noah Levings became active as an exhorter. "After working at the anvil, through the day, he would throw off his apron and paper cap, wash, and change his dress, and walk, with Spicer, to Albia, where he exhorted at the close of the sermons." Naturally gifted with energy, rare tact, and vivid eloquence, young Levings rapidly rose to eminence not only in his own denomination, but in the general religious community. In 1817 Samuel Luckey had similar success in Troy, adding about one hundred and fifty members. In 1813 the erection of Division-street church in Albany gave a new impulse to the denomination in that city, and it has advanced, though with occasional and severe trials, ever since.

[9] The date is uncertain. It was "about the year 1807 to 1809."—Park's Troy Conf. Miscellany, p. 48.

Zealous Captain Webb had preached in Schenectady as early as 1766 or 1767, but its first Methodist society was not formed till 1807, when Andrew M'Kain, of Albany Circuit, united some fifteen or twenty members who had been converted, in social meetings, at the house of Richard Clute. The same year Samuel Howe was appointed their circuit preacher. They worshiped in private houses, and, later, in a schoolhouse, till 1809, when they built a humble temple, and in 1816 became a station under the charge of Laban Clark, though yet a "little flock," comprising but fifty members. Nearly the whole Ashgrove District was astir with revivals during these years. Camp-meetings were now in more general vogue than ever, and rekindled, summer after summer, religious interest throughout the whole territory of the middle and northern Conferences.

In each year of the period, able young men, besides those already mentioned, and destined to become generally recognized as ministerial leaders, but of most of whom no adequate records remain, entered the itinerancy: in 1805 Charles Giles, George Lane; in 1807, Peter P. Sandford, Phineas Rice, Lewis Pease, George Harmon; in 1808, Friend Draper, Thomas Neal, William Jewett; in 1809, Stephen Martindale, Isaac Puffer, Loring Grant, Coles Carpenter, George Gary; in 1810, Arnold Scolefield, Benjamin G. Paddock, Seth Mattison; in 1811, Joseph Lybrand, Manning Force, John B. Matthias, Benjamin Griffin, Marmaduke Pearce; in 1812, David Daily, George Banghart, Tobias Spicer, Elisha Williams, William Ross, Gad Smith, Gideon Lanning; in 1813, John Potts, Israel Chamberlayne; in 1814, Joseph Rusling, Buel Goodsell, Elias Bowen; in 1815, Richard W. Petherbridge, Josiah Bowen; and in the remaining five years John Dempster, George Peck, Fitch Reed, John

J. Matthias, Charles Pitman, Noah Levings, Seymour Landon, Zachariah Paddock, Glezen Fillmore, men of pre-eminence in the pastorate, or in educational institutions, editorial positions, the missionary secretaryship, the American Bible Society, but who were yet in their youthful preparatory training. Scores of others joined the itinerancy with these, many of them scarcely less important laborers, if not so familiar to the present generation of Methodists, and whose names, with these, may hereafter be more conveniently commemorated.

CHAPTER V.

METHODISM IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN STATES, 1804–1820: CONCLUDED.

Methodism in the Interior of Pennsylvania and New York — Old Canaan Circuit — Peter Vannest crosses the Genesee River — First Class and first Camp-meeting beyond it — George Lane — Glezen Fillmore "Exhorting" — Thomas Smith's Northern Adventures — A Scene in Lyons, N. Y. — Organization of Genesee Conference — Methodism in Canada — William Case, "the Apostle to the Indians" — Progress in Canada — The War — Robert Hibbard perishes in the St. Lawrence — Declension of the Provincial Church by the War — Its renewed Prosperity — Genesee Conference meets in Canada — Great Revival — Continued Success — Canadian Methodism in 1820 — Methodism of the Middle and North in 1820 — Obituary of Preachers — Asbury.

Meanwhile the frontier movement of Methodism in the middle and northern states, which we have heretofore traced, was energetically advancing. The Susquehanna District, pertaining to the Baltimore Conference, with Owen, Griffith, Paynter, Christopher Frye, Draper, and a succession of similar men, as preachers, prospered greatly. In 1807 Draper was sent to form the Canaan Circuit,[1] of ancient renown, and the Church advanced rapidly among the Cumberland, Tioga, and Wyoming mountains and valleys. The local historian, referring to Canaan Circuit as an example of the hard field, says that its itinerant preachers "each received $49 98 and their traveling expenses. Let the present race of preachers survey the territory, think of the roads as they then were, and of the accommodations, and look

[1] Peck's "Early Methodism," p. 158.

at the scanty pittance which the preachers received, and ask themselves if the contrast presents no occasion for gratitude and contentment. Here is embraced the whole of the present Honesdale District, consisting of seventeen charges, besides portions of Wyoming, Wyalusing, and Binghamton Districts, and a portion of New York and New Jersey Conferences. This is the extent of Canaan Circuit in 1810. The roads cannot be conceived of now. We know what they were ten years later, and then mud, rocks, stumps and roots, pole bridges, and no bridges! To travel these roads in hunger, cold, nakedness, and weariness, and often to lodge in open cabins, among dirt and insects, and receive almost fifty dollars in the course of the year! This was the itinerancy in 1810 in the Genesee Conference."

In the more northerly interior the denomination extended among the New York lakes, planting itself in most of the small settlements which have since risen into flourishing towns and cities. It passed over the Genesee River, as we have seen, in 1804, represented by a useful layman, David Hamlin, who for three years gathered the settlers in his own house for religious worship. Peter Vannest, who had been tending in this direction for years as an itinerant, forded the Genesee River in 1807, near the present city of Rochester, and delivered his first sermon in what is now Ogden Center. The first class was organized the same year in Newstead, at the house of Charles Knight. The next year a youth, George Lane, afterward well known throughout the Church, as a faithful itinerant, as Book Agent at New York, and as a saintly man, crossed the Genesee, and held the first camp-meeting of that region. He traveled Vannest's new circuit, laboring unceasingly, and spread out the cause in all directions, preaching

as far as Buffalo. He reached at last the northernmost tracks of the ultra-Alleghany itinerants of Pennsylvania, in the region since known as the Erie Conference. In 1809 Glezen Fillmore, a young "exhorter," visited Clarence. "He had joined the Church in Westmoreland. He went to a place now called Skinnersville, to see a family with whom he had been acquainted at the East. He was invited to hold a meeting, and left an appointment for the next Sabbath. On Sunday morning he went, and, on his approach, he saw people wandering about carelessly; but upon ariving at the place of meeting he found no one there except the family. Wright, the man of the house, seemed distressed at the disappointment, and, rising under the influence of considerable excitement, said, 'I cannot stand it.' He went out, and returned with two persons, a man by the name of Maltby, and his wife. The family and these two constituted the congregation; but Fillmore, nothing daunted, proceeded with his meeting. Maltby and his wife seemed considerably impressed. At the close of the exercises Maltby said it had been 'a solemn meeting,' repeating the words several times. He invited Fillmore to hold another at his house the next Sabbath, to which he gave his cordial consent. When the time arrived the house was full, and a good religious feeling prevailed. A revival immediately commenced, and a society was formed. Maltby and his wife were among the converts, and he became a local preacher Four of his sons are now members of the Erie Conference. Grand results often follow what appear to be small causes: Fillmore was licensed to preach, and continued his labors in a local capacity for the space of nine years, preaching in the newly opening settlements, and preparing the way for the traveling preachers.

This period he considers as one of the most useful and successful portions of his life." He was to have a prominent place in the subsequent history of the Church.

In 1805 Thomas Smith, whose notable adventures in New Jersey and more southern regions have been related, was sent, with Charles Giles, to the Seneca Circuit, which comprised all the country between the Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, south and west of the latter, and north to Lyons, with few settlers scattered over it, and they extremely poor. Smith had his usual trials and success in this new field. On his way to it his life was periled by a highwayman, who attacked him in the Water Gap of the Blue Mountain. He found Indians still numerous on his circuit, and preached where "the shining tomahawk and glittering scalping knife" were within sight. He suffered from the diseases of the country, and at one time "lay six days, on three old chairs," in a log-cabin, sick with fever. He was, however, a dauntless itinerant. It was of himself that he spoke when, alluding to the sufferings of the ministry, he recorded that he knew "one that has rode four thousand miles, and preached four hundred sermons in one year, and laid many nights on wet cabin floors, sometimes covered with snow through the night, and his horse standing under a pelting storm of snow or rain, and at the end of that year received his traveling expenses and four silver dollars of his salary."[2] He held frequent camp-meetings among the settlers, and pushed forward on his circuit as if determined to conquer the whole country. Opposers could not stand before him. He assailed them sometimes in quite original modes of attack. At Lyons lived a highly respectable Methodist, Judge Dorsey, whose wife, Eleanor Dorsey, was one of

[2] Smith's "Experience and Ministerial Labors," p. 116.

those "women of Methodism" who ministered to Asbury and the other earliest itinerants in Maryland.[3] The general spirit of emigration had led them to this new country, and their house was now the home of Methodist preachers. Smith went to Lyons, and says: "Here we had a respectable society, and a small meeting-house. But the people of Lyons were generally wicked. They took pleasure in unrighteousness, in deriding the ways of God, and in persecuting the humble followers of Jesus Christ. They interrupted and insulted us in our religious worship, and on this evening they were worse than usual. I paused until I got their attention, and then remarked that I should not wonder if Lyons should be visited on the morrow in a way that it never had been before, and perhaps never would be again to the end of time. We then had quietness to the close of the meeting. When the congregation was dismissed, and I had come out of the house, the people gathered around me, and with one voice cried out, 'For God's sake, tell us what is to happen here to-morrow!' I replied, 'Let to-morrow speak for itself.' I went home with Judge Dorsey, a short distance from the town. After breakfast the next day I said to Mrs. Dorsey, 'I wish you to go with me into Lyons this morning, as there are some families to which I cannot get access without you.' She, being acquainted with the place, readily consented. At nine o'clock A. M. we entered the town. Scores from the country were already there, and the place was in commotion. We went to the house of Mr. ——, where we were politely received. I knew if we could storm that castle the day was ours. After conversing some time, I remarked that Mrs. Dorsey and myself were on a visit to Lyons, and, if it were

[3] "Women of Methodism," p. 250. New York, 1866.

agreeable, we would pray before we parted. 'By all means, Mr. Smith; by all means, sir.' Before prayer was over there were scores of people at the door, and by this time the order of the day began to be understood, and they that feared God were at their posts, coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We then went, in large procession, from house to house, entering every door in order, and praying for the souls of the families. Our little band soon increased to some three or four hundred. When we came near the tavern, where we had been derided, it was inquired, 'Will they admit us?' But the doors and windows being open, we entered in, and was there ever such a shout while storming Lucifer's castle? At four o'clock in the afternoon we called a halt to see what was done, and, forming a circle on the green, the new converts were invited within the circle, when thirty-two came in, who that day had found the pearl of great price, Christ in them the hope of glory. These thirty-two, and eight more, were added to the Church of God on that afternoon. Thanks be to God, this was another good day's work in the Lord's vineyard. This meeting produced a pleasing change in Lyons, and Methodism gained a footing in that place it never had before. To God be the glory!"

So rapidly had it spread through these interior regions that in 1810 Asbury organized it in a new Conference. Hitherto its territory had been strangely divided among the New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore Conferences. It was now to have unity, and to speedily grow into one of the strongest bodies of the denomination, and to yield in our day five Conferences. On the twentieth of July the preachers of the Susquehanna, Cayuga, and two Canada Districts, were con-

vened at the barn of Judge Dorsey, in Lyons, and there formed the new organization, comprising all their recent territory, except Lower Canada. Asbury and M'Kendree presided. Increased efficiency was thus immediately given to its work. Its three districts, thirty circuits, and ten thousand seven hundred members of 1810 increased, by the end of the present period, to eight districts, seventy-four circuits, and nearly twenty-four thousand members, more than doubling all its forces in a decade. It included Canada during the whole period.

In the latter country now appeared, (in 1805,) for the first time, two very important men, Henry Ryan and William Case. The former we have already met in Vermont, where he began his ministry in 1800, an energetic Irishman, and one of the sturdiest itinerants of his day. William Case will ever rank as one of the noblest acquisitions of the ministry. Known most generally as the "Apostle to the Canadian Indians," he was, nevertheless, a New Englander, born at Swansea, Mass., in 1780.[4] He was converted in 1803, received into the New York Conference in 1805, and, being young and zealous, was forthwith sent to Canada. He was subsequently tossed about for years in the Province and in the States, from the Ulster Circuit in New York to Detroit in Michigan. He was one of the original members of the Genesee Conference, and one of its first three presiding elders in 1810; Draper and Ryan being the two others. For eighteen years he had charge of districts—the Cayuga, Oneida, Chenango, Lower Canada, Upper Canada, and Bay of Quinte. In 1828 he was appointed superintendent of Indian missions and schools in Canada, and in 1830 general superintendent

[4] Carroll's "Past and Present," p. 230. Toronto, 1860.

of the Methodist societies in the province. During several years he was missionary to the Indians, when a "sack, inclosed in a blanket, slung on the back by what was called a 'tumpline' across the shoulders and a gun, with a small store of powder, constituted an Indian preacher's outfit." In 1852 he was allowed to travel and preach at large through the province till his death in 1855. He was esteemed for years as the patriarch and leader of Canadian Methodism, the chief of its great mission field, a truly apostolic man, fervid, genial, prudent, attractive and effective in the pulpit, singularly successful and beloved among the Indians. He was instrumental in the conversion of hundreds of the latter, and equally useful among the whites, and was especially conspicuous in a general revival in 1808, "when the voice of prayer and praise was heard by day and night in the houses and barns, in the fields and woods, all over the country." Canadian Methodism mostly grew up during his ministry in the province, and he lived to see it represented by three hundred and thirty itinerants, scattered over two hundred and ten circuits. "He was," says a Canadian authority,[5] "the director of the rising ministry of the Methodist Church in Canada before she had a college in which to train them, and he was the friend of that institution from the moment it was projected to the day of his death, watching its progress and doings with the most lively interest. He would sometimes talk about 'his boys' in the pulpit in a way that set the young aspirants to usefulness weeping around him. Little children, too, he loved, and took a great interest in their schools. On this account he was a welcome visitant in the various families whose hospitality he enjoyed. The little Indian

[5] Carroll, p. 222.

children, even, would literally pluck his clothes, 'to share the good man's smile.' Nor did they fail in their object. He would often pursue these tawny little ones, and, catching them, would kiss them with all the fondness imaginable."

In 1806 Canada has two districts, and twelve circuits, including two pertaining to New York Conference. Samuel Coate is at Montreal, and Nathan Bangs at Quebec. A Lower Canada District appears in the Minutes, and a mission to its French population is added to the appointments. Thomas Whitehead, a Wesleyan preacher of Nova Scotia, but born in the United States, is added to the little ministerial corps, and also Andrew Prindle, the second native Canadian itinerant. The first, Sylvanus Keeler, locates, but continues through his life to promote effectively his Church. They were the beginning of a powerful native ministry, which in a few years was to render Canadian Methodism independent of foreign laborers. In 1808 the first report of members in Quebec appears; hardly more than a single "class," thirteen in number. Methodism, however, was destined to find a stronghold in that city, though long harassed by public prejudice, and the coming war. In 1809 Detroit, Mich., is reached by Case. Bangs had been defeated there, as we have seen, but the new itinerant met with better auspices. "The gospel spread fast," says the Canadian Methodist historian,[6] "like fire through dry stubble." Detroit continued to be, for years, an appointment of the Upper Canada District; Methodist preachers took yet but little note of geographical demarcations, civil or physical; with Wesley, they considered "the world to be their parish." In the same year the Three Rivers Circuit, in Lower Canada, was re-

[6] Playter, p. 97.

ported, and traveled by Joseph Sampson, the third native Methodist itinerant, though he now came from Baltimore Conference.

At the organization of the Genesee Conference in 1810 the Upper Canada District was placed under its jurisdiction, while that of Lower Canada was retained by New York Conference; there were not yet, however, two hundred members in all the five appointments of the latter. Joseph Sawyer now located; Case went to preside over the Cayuga District, in New York; but reinforcements arrived. There were seventeen circuits and twenty-one preachers. Luckey was among them the next year, and found, on his remote Ottawa Circuit, a hundred and sixteen members. The whole country now became alarmed by the omens of the approaching war, and, in the next year, none of the preachers went to the Conferences in the states. That of New York gave up all the lower province to that of Genesee, except the Dunham Circuit. New England Conference retained Stanstead Circuit, where Charles Virgin, David Kilbourn, and other eastern itinerants had been laboring for some years, crossing the line of their Vermont territory. No returns of members reached the Genesee Conference from the upper province, but, in the lower, Montreal reported more than fifty, Quebec about half that number, Ottawa Circuit about a hundred, and that of St. Francis River one hundred and twenty. Bangs was appointed to Montreal, but did not reach it on account of the military obstructions between the two countries. Thomas Burch was sent to Quebec, and made his way thither; Luckey, appointed to St. Francis, failed to get there. Robert Hibbard, a native of New York, who had joined its Conference in 1809, and for two years had labored faithfully in Canada, where he had formed the St.

Francis Circuit, gathering upon it more than a hundred members, consented to return notwithstanding the troubled times. He reached the Ottawa Circuit, and kept to his work, though the provincial government had, by proclamation, ordered all citizens of the United States to leave the country. Learning that the preachers for the St. Francis Circuit, so dear to him, as his own work, had not arrived, he resolved to go thither and encourage the Churches under their new trials. He reached Montreal, but in his further progress was drowned in the St. Lawrence; his horse escaped to the shore, but the evangelical hero was borne away, and was seen "going down with his hands lifted toward heaven." His body was never found. He was a sanctified man, "studious," and "indefatigable," and, say his brethren in their Minutes, "entered the watery grave to rise again to a glorious immortality at the last day."[1] Asbury delivered a "funeral sermon" on the event before the next New York Conference.

In 1813 the war had cut off all communication between the Churches of the two countries. The preachers could not attend the Genesee Conference, but they met together and made their own appointments as best they could. The circuits of the upper district were at least nominally manned, but in the lower, Quebec, Montreal, St. Francis, and Ottawa, were without preachers. Several itinerants in the upper province located; all, indeed, except Ryan, Rhodes, Whitehead, and Prindle. Those who located, however, continued to serve the Church in their respective localities, and some of the located veterans, Sawyer in Matilda, Keeler in Elizabethtown, and Dunham in Fredericksburgh, worked zealously in these and neighboring places

[1] Minutes of 1813.

Methodism was thus sustained during the crisis. The Church in Quebec had no regular pastor for two years of the struggle; but a Methodist sergeant in a British regiment preached for them with much success. When his regiment was removed, a local preacher was raised up, who supplied them till the English Conference sent over pastors for Montreal and Quebec.

At the close of the contest in 1815 the Genesee Conference resumed its care of the country. Case was appointed presiding elder of Upper Canada District, Ryan of that of Lower Canada. There were now but nine circuits and twelve preachers. Montreal and Quebec were unsupplied; but the British Conference sent over three missionaries for these stations, and thus was brought on the question of territorial jurisdiction, which subsequently led to no small amount of discussion and negotiation, but was at last amicably settled with more intimate relations between the two bodies than ever existed before since the organization of the American Church. The war ended with a loss of nearly one half the membership in Canada, the returns of 1815 amounting to but one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five. But Methodism was too vital to suffer long from such a cause. The next year the Minutes show eleven circuits, with sixteen preachers, and two thousand five hundred members. They had yet but eleven churches or "meeting-houses," all built of wood except that of Montreal, which was of stone, but small. Freer scope than ever was now given to the denom nation in the Canadas.

In 1817 the Genesee Conference, many of whose preachers were curious to see their foreign territory, held its session at Elizabethtown, Canada. About eighty of them assembled there, including twenty-two

Canadian itinerants. Enoch George presided, and the occasion was a jubilee to the Church in the wilderness. There was daily and powerful preaching, and a great revival was kindled. It was estimated that one hundred souls were awakened at the session, and a flame of religious excitement spread out among the circuits, so that an increase of one thousand four hundred members the ensuing year was attributed to this first Canadian Conference. The gospel was now preached in every English settlement of Upper Canada, for Methodism, besides its itinerants, traveling immense circuits, had a large corps of local preachers and exhorters, who were kept incessantly at work. Meanwhile the British Conference continued to send out Wesleyan missionaries. There were nine of them in the country in 1818, who extended their labors even to Toronto and the Bay of Quinte, and thus further complicated the question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Correspondence between the American bishops and the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, London, followed; the relations of the two Churches were cordial, but unsettled in respect to Canada, and could not be adjusted till the next General Conference, when Emory was dispatched to England for the purpose.

In 1820 the Genesee Conference again met in Canada, at Niagara, the oldest town in the province. About a hundred itinerants were present, eighteen recruits were received, thirty young preachers were ordained, and one hundred and twenty-two appointed to circuits and stations. There were now in Upper Canada sixteen clergymen of the Church of England, fifteen Presbyterian and Congregational, and eighteen Baptist preachers. The Methodist itinerants (including the Wesleyan missionaries) were thirty-three, besides forty-seven local

preachers, and sixty-five exhorters.[3] Many of the local preachers having been noted itinerants, continued to perform as effective work as any pastors of other denominations. The actual working ministry of Methodism must now have constituted more than one half of the pastoral supply of the province. William Case and Henry Ryan were at the head of its itinerants as presiding elders, the former on the Upper, the latter on the Lower Canada Districts. The number of Methodists in the country (including the Wesleyan charges) amounted to six thousand three hundred. They had much more than trebled in these sixteen years, though they had thus far only been planting in the wilderness, the germs of that harvest which was to yield, in our day, nearly one hundred thousand members in the various Methodist communions, and nearly a thousand traveling preachers, with Indian missions, publishing houses, periodicals, colleges, academies, and churches, many of them costly edifices, adorning the whole settled country. They were to keep pace with emigration, and reach westward to the Pacific coast; and eastward, till they should blend with the Methodism planted by Coughland, M'Greary, Black, and Garrettson on the Atlantic coast, and the denomination become the most effective religious force of British North America.

The period closes then with a grand exhibit of strength and prospect for the middle and northern fields of the denomination. Not merely their numerical growth from two to three Conferences, from 40,415 to 82,215 members, and from 135 to 297 preachers, more than doubling their force in these sixteen years, in spite of secessions in Philadelphia and New York; but the intellectual

[3] Letter of Case and Ryan (July 28, 1820) to Nathan Bangs. Playter, p. 191.

advancement of their ministry, the rapid erection of church edifices, the ever memorable organization of the general Missionary Society, the beginning of periodical publications, and the recommencement of academic institutions, (all three events in New York city,) render this one of the most imposing epochs of American Methodism.

More than thirty itinerants of the middle and northern Conferences fell at their posts, by death, in these sixteen years. Besides some special cases, heretofore noticed, like those of Peter Moriarty, John M'Claskey, Anning Owen, and Robert Hibbard, the obituary of the Minutes in 1805 records the name of Daniel Ryan, of Philadelphia, who died "overwhelmed with a sense of the presence and glory of God;" of Benjamin Iliff, of Bucks County, Pa., who sickened on his way from Conference, whose "happiness seemed to increase with his illness," and who died saying, "I have lost sight of the world; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." In 1806 James Lattomus, of Delaware, who "departed in peace." In 1808 Richard Swain, of New Jersey, who, after long labors and sufferings, died "in confident peace, triumphant faith, and the smiles of a present God." In 1810 John Wilson, an Englishman, some years a preacher in the old country, from 1804 till his death Book Agent at New York, "an able divine," "conversant with the Greek and Roman classics," powerful in the pulpit, a preacher of "sanctification;" he died suddenly of suffocation by asthma. Thomas Daughaday, of Maryland, who fell in Pennsylvania, his last utterance being the words, "Glory! glory!" Thomas Budd, of New Jersey, who died in Philadelphia, harassed on his deathbed with doubts; "but the cloud suddenly burst, and his soul was filled with joy." William Keith, of Massachusetts, who died in

New York city; troubled also, like Budd, and Bunyan's Pilgrim, as he approached the end, but declaring at last that "the fear of death and hell is wholly taken away and I have a hope of immortality;" a man of extreme humility and diffidence, but of great power in preaching. Gideon A. Knowlton, of Connecticut, a laborer in interior New York; he attended and helped to organize the first Genesee Conference, and returned to die, exclaiming, "I am now going to my eternal home; I know that my Redeemer liveth." In 1811 Lansford Whiting, who, after traveling three years in the state of New York and Canada, volunteered to accompany M'Kendree to the Western Conference, but on the way was attacked with small-pox, returned, and died in peace, a meek and useful man. In 1812 Samuel Thomas, of New Jersey, a very holy man, "yet subject to dejection, and frequently tempted and buffeted by the devil," but who died in great peace. John Smith, of Maryland, who had labored in the West as well as the East, and departed, saying, "I am not afraid to die; I long to be dissolved and see the face of God." In 1813 John Russell, of New York city, who, on his deathbed, declared, "I have found that love which casteth out fear," and died "testifying of the comforts of the Holy Ghost." Ebenezer White, of Massachusetts, an eminent itinerant of Genesee Conference, where "he labored, traveling through storms, heat, and cold, when his infirmities indicated dissolution near;" when "not able to preach standing on his feet, he stood on his knees" proclaiming the word of God with power. He died suddenly, without a farewell word, except the text of his last sermon, which was, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." William Mills, of New Jersey, an officer of the Revolution, some years a prisoner of war in the West

Indies, a very zealous and useful preacher, and a guileless man. He fell under an attack of apoplexy while preparing to preach, and was found insensible in his chamber. Francis Ward, an Irishman, a successful preacher and good scholar, who died in peace. In 1814 Michael Coate, of New Jersey, whom we have met often, not only in the middle states, but in New England and Canada, a man of great meekness and usefulness, and a powerful preacher; tried "by inexpressible conflicts" in his last sickness, but, hearing the Scriptures read, "the power of God filled the place, and his soul was abundantly comforted," so that he departed in peace. William S. Fisher, of New Jersey, who died "crying out, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." To his friends he said, "All is peace within; I am going after Brother Coate." His last words in his last agony were "This once help, Lord." In 1815 John Van Schoick, of New Jersey, who died in great triumph, exclaiming, "Keep up prayer;" "come, Lord, roll on the victory; roll on the victory, holy Lord! O hasten the moment, my Lord!" and then adding, "I am going," fell asleep. Stephen Richmond, of New York, who departed, saying, "My work is done." In 1818 Joseph Totten, of Long Island, N. Y., a good and useful man, who was found dying and speechless on the ground in a garden. Daniel Moore, of Delaware, who left, as his dying testimony, the assurance that he "was going home to God." Thomas Thorp, of New Jersey, converted, as we have seen, under Marvin Richardson's first sermon on his first circuit, where young Thorp was a schoolmaster at the time. He traveled in New England, and in the Genesee Conference, and died "in peace and triumph." In 1819 Stephen Jacob, who "labored far beyond his strength, fell a martyr to his

work," and departed in "holy triumph," saying, "heaven heaves in view."

Some twenty-five times did Asbury pass over the middle and northern states in the present period, penetrating once into Canada; but his notes of his routes have their usual brevity and vagueness, and admit of no satisfactory use. In his early tours he was sometimes accompanied by Whatcoat, who, however, was fast sinking under chronic maladies, and was "unable to ride" much of the time "at a greater speed than a walk." In some of his later passages M'Kendree was with him, keeping good pace, and delighting him by his devout converse and eloquent preaching, for to no man, except Henry Willis, was Asbury more attached. At a session of the New York Conference, in this period, he says of M'Kendree, preaching, "It appeared to me as if a ray of divine glory rested upon him." Asbury, though quite broken with years and disease, still kept his rate of five or six thousand miles a year, writing often in his journal, "faint, sick, and lame." As early as 1807 he says, "We have traveled one hundred miles up the Mohawk; my feet are much swelled; I am on crutches; but I have been supported among strangers." He reaches the westernmost fields of the interior preachers, the Pennsylvania valleys, and New York lakes, and organizes them into the independent Genesee Conference. He preaches there often to more than a thousand settlers, gathered in and about barns. "The swamps, sloughs, ruts, and stumps made it awful moving' he writes. He exulted, however, in the triumphs of the gospel and the prospects of the Church in these regions, and, as he rode away southward, wrote, "What hath God wrought in America! In thirty-six years we find 144,590 Methodists; our traveling preachers 536; the

rest, local, about 1,400. "Not unto us, not unto us. O Lord, take thou the glory!" "My body is very feeble," he writes later, "but my soul enjoys perfect love and perfect peace." He was now, as he says, "a bishop who can neither stand to preach, nor kneel to pray;" "sick, lame, blistered," but still driving forward.

It was in 1811 that he crossed the St. Lawrence to encourage the itinerant pioneers of Canada. "Surely," he wrote, "this is a land that God the Lord hath blessed." He greeted there some of the remnants of the first New York Methodist families, the Dulmadges, Hecks, and Emburys, spent two weeks traveling and preaching, "everywhere treated as the angel of the Churches," says Boehm, his companion, but "suffering like a martyr" from inflammatory rheumatism.

In the North as in the South he is now often reminded of the changes of time. In some places he finds only the grandchildren of his earliest hearers. He preaches the funeral sermon of his old friend Martin Boehm, and later writes out in the bereaved homestead his own "valedictory statement" for M'Kendree,[9] which gives evident proof that he himself is growing old, and is soon to depart. He meets the venerable M'Graw, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, who had so early befriended the Methodists in Delaware, but who is now "quite broken to pieces." He finds Pilmoor old, but still at his post in Philadelphia, preaching three times a Sabbath. He has moments of profound sadness, even of despondence, yet they are but moments; never before has he seemed so eager to travel, preach, and

[9] It has never been published. A copy, in thirty-four closely written duodecimo pages, is in my possession, from the papers of Rev. F. S. De Hass. It shows the decay of the bishop's intellect, being written between two and three years before his death, and contains nothing of historical importance.

achieve well his great mission. His absorption in his work allows him to see, but hardly to feel, these changes of his life; continual suffering even cannot subdue him. "I groan one minute with pain, and shout glory the next," he writes in the summer of 1814. "I look back," he continues, "upon a martyr's life of toil and privation and pain, and I am ready for a martyr's death; the purity of my intentions, my diligence in the labors to which God has been pleased to call me, the unknown sufferings I have endured; what are all these? The merit, atonement, and righteousness of Christ alone make my plea."

CHAPTER VI.

METHODISM IN THE EASTERN STATES, 1804–1820.

Review — Lee — Aaron Sandford — Ministerial Recruits — Wilbur Fisk — Importance of his Services — His Character — Edward T Taylor, Mariners' Preacher, Boston — His Romantic History — Joshua Soule — Elijah Hedding — His Review of his Itinerant Life — George Pickering — Martin Ruter — Progress of the Church.

By the superior supply of the published data of Methodism in the eastern states I have been able, thus far, to give a more thorough and consecutive record of that part of the denomination than of any other; and as most of its representative men, for the ensuing quarter of the century, have been anticipated, we can pass rapidly over the remaining outlines of our narrative. We have seen Lee preaching his first sermon in New England, at Norwalk, Conn., on the 17th of June, 1789; organizing his first class, or society, of three women, September 25, at Stratfield; receiving his first male member, the first New England Methodist layman, Aaron Sanford,[1] at Reading, December 28; welcoming his first ministerial reinforcement, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith, February 27, 1790; delivering his first sermon, in Boston, on its Common, in

[1] Aaron Sandford was worthy of this peculiar distinction. He was also the first class-leader, first steward, and first local preacher of New England Methodism. He and his wife's sister, Mrs. Hawley, were the first two members of Lee's second class. His house sheltered the way-worn itinerants for more than fifty years. "Here," says one of those who long knew him, "the itinerant has always found a friend and a home; here the Christian brother has always found a kindly reception, and a resting-place. He has lived to see the work of God spread all

July; forming the first class of Massachusetts, at Lynn, February 20, 1791, and dedicating its first church there June 26, where also the first New England Conference was held August 3, 1792. We have followed him, through all the New England states, even to the remotest points of the province of Maine, and taken leave of him, at the conclusion of his great mission, in 1800, when, after eleven years of hardest labor, his cause was permanently established in every eastern state, with nearly six thousand members, and nearly fifty traveling preachers. At the end of four years more, when we last surveyed the hard-fought field, we found in it more than ten thousand Methodists, with about fifty circuits, and more than eighty itinerants.

The present period (1804–1820) opens with a host of able men in the eastern itinerancy, most of whose names are already familiar to us: Moriarty, Crowell, Crawford, Beale, Brodhead, Ruter, Hedding, Soule, Ostrander, Washburn, Pickering, Kibby, Jane, Snelling, Webb, Joshua Taylor, Munger, Heath, Hilman, Merwin, Chichester, Sabin, Kent, and many others. Recruits, not a few of whom have survived till our day, were to be rapidly added to the ranks: in 1804 Lewis Bates; in 1806 Joel Steele, Caleb Fogg, Solomon Sias; 1807 Charles Virgin, Joseph A. Merrill; 1808 Isaac Bonney, William Swaze, David Kilburn; 1809 John

around him, far and wide, beyond his most enlarged expectations. He has had ten children, nine of whom have been married, and he has had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing them all converted to God, and joined to the same Church with himself. Three of his children have died in the faith; two of his sons, with himself, are local preachers. He has about a dozen grandchildren, who are members of the Church, and one of them is now actively engaged in the itinerant ministry." He became one of the wealthiest men of the town, survived, with nearly unimpaired faculties, beyond his ninetieth year, and died in the peace of the gospel, in Reading, Conn., March 29, 1847.

Lindsey, George Gary, Benjamin R. Hoyt, Coles Carpenter, Amasa Taylor, Ebenezer F. Newell, Edward Hyde; 1811 Thomas Norris, Daniel Fillmore; 1812 Jacob Sanborn, John Adams, Thomas Tucker, Joseph Iveson; 1813 Van Rensselaer Osborn; 1814 Thomas C. Pierce, Bartholomew Otheman; 1815 John Lord, Nathan Payne; 1816 Daniel Dorchester, Moses Fifield; and, toward the close of the period, increasing numbers of familiar names, Jennison, Wiley, Hascall, Fisk, Taylor, Stoddard, Horton, Crandall, Baker—a bald list of names, but if of little interest to the general reader, yet all of them mementoes of precious memories to New England Methodists. Many others of the same dates, and of hardly less importance, could be added; but, like most of these, their historical significance belongs to a period beyond our present limits, when it will devolve upon the historian to show that not a few of the humblest of them were men of heroic character, whose travels and labors, in many instances, extended through half a century, and from Canada to Long Island Sound.

The appearance of Wilbur Fisk in the ministry in 1818, may be said to have dated a new epoch in New England Methodism. A man of intrinsic greatness; of the highest style of Christian character; of rare pulpit eloquence, full of grace, dignity, and power, he was also the first Methodist preacher of the eastern states who had the advantages of a collegiate education; a fact of no little importance among the people of New England. No man did more to redeem his Church from the imputation of ignorance, not to say the contempt, with which it had been branded among the trained clergy of those states; for, notwithstanding the ministerial competence and greatness of such men as Merritt, Ruter, Soule, and Hedding, their commission had been

generally discredited, beyond their own people, for lack of academic diplomas. Fisk led up the whole Methodism of the East in educational enterprise, ministerial culture, and public influence; while his saintly life presented a model of Christian character, which impressed his entire denomination, not only in New England, but throughout all the land, for his usefulness and reputation became national.

He was born in Brattleborough, Vt., in 1792,[2] joined the Church in his eleventh year, and graduated with honor at Brown University, Providence, R. I., in 1815. Like Emory, he abandoned the study of law for the itinerant ministry, in 1818, when he was sent by a presiding elder to Craftsbury Circuit, Vt. In 1819 and 1820 he was stationed at Charlestown, Mass., where his health failed, and he was reported "supernumerary" till 1823, when he took charge of the Vermont District; but, in the third year of his presiding eldership, was elected principal of the Wesleyan Academy, Wilbraham, Mass. In 1828 he was elected bishop of the Canada Conference, but declined the appointment that he might mature his plans of Methodist education in New England. In 1830 he was called to the presidency of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., of which he was one of the founders. In 1835 his enfeebled health compelled him to make a voyage to Europe, where he officially represented American Methodism in the Wesleyan Conference. He was elected bishop of his Church while absent, but again declined the episcopal office in favor of his function as an educator. Returning, he continued his labors in the Wesleyan University with declining health, but unabated devotion, till his death.

[2] Life of Wilbur Fisk, D. D., etc., by Joseph Holdich, D. D., p. 18 New York, 1842.

In all these positions, beyond the limits of our present period, the history of the Church will recognize him as one of the principal, if not indeed the principal representative of her great interests, a leader in her General Conferences, a tireless promoter of her education, missions, and literature, an invincible defender of her theology and polity, an orator in her pulpits and on her philanthropic platforms, a saint in her calendar.

Wilbur Fisk's person bespoke his character. It was of good size, and remarkable for its symmetry. His features were harmonious, the contour strongly resembling the better Roman outline. His eye was nicely defined, and, when excited, beamed with a peculiarly benign and conciliatory expression. His complexion was bilious, and added to the diseased indication of his somewhat attenuated features. His head was a model not of great, but of well-proportioned development. It had the height of the Roman brow, though not the breadth of the Greek.[3] His voice was peculiarly flexible and sonorous. A catarrhal disease affected it; but just enough, during most of his life, to improve its tone to a soft orotund, without a trace of

[3] The two portraits of him which have been engraved recall his appearance well enough to those who were familiar with it, but can hardly afford an accurate impression to such as never saw him. One of them, presenting him in the primitive ministerial costume of the Church, (which he doffed, in later years,) has too much of the languor of disease. There is an aspect of debility, if not decay, about it which did not belong to the original, notwithstanding his habitual ill-health. It is preferred, however, by many of his friends to the second engraving, an English production, marked by ideal exaggerations, and not a little of that exquisite and unnatural nicety with which Wesleyan preachers are flattered in their "Magazine" portraits. There is a bust of him extant; but it is not to be looked at by any who would not mar in their memories the beautiful and benign image of his earlier manhood by the disfigurations of disease and suffering.

nasal defect. It rendered him a charming singer, and was an instrument of music to him in the pulpit. Without appearing to use it designedly for vocal effect, it was nevertheless an important means of impression to his sermons. Few men could indicate the moral emotions more effectually by mere tones. It was especially expressive in pathetic passages.

His pulpit manner was marked, in the introduction of the sermon by dignity, but dignity without ceremony or pretension. As he advanced into the exposition and argument of his discourse, (and there were both in most of his sermons,) he became more emphatic, especially as brilliant, though brief illustrations, ever and anon, gleamed upon his logic. By the time he had reached the peroration his utterance became rapid, his thoughts were glowing, the music of his voice rung out in thrilling tones, and sometimes quivered with trills of pathos. No imaginative excitement prevailed in the audience as under Maffitt's eloquence, no tumultuous wonder as under Bascom's, none of Cookman's impetuous passion, or Olin's overwhelming power, but a subduing, almost tranquil spell, of genial feeling, expressed often by tears or half suppressed ejaculations; something of the deep but gentle effect of Summerfield combined with a higher intellectual impression.

If genius cannot be claimed for him, nor the very highest order of intellect, yet he approached both so nearly as to command the admiration of the best cultivated minds, and the almost idolatrous interest of the people. Good vigor in all his faculties, and good balance of them all, were his chief intellectual characteristics. His literary acquisitions were not great. The American collegiate course in his day was stinted. After his graduation he was too busy to study much, and he was

not a great reader. His resources were chiefly in himself; in his good sense, his quick sagacity, his generous sensibilities, and his healthy and fertile imagination. He possessed the latter power richly, though it never ran riot in his discourses. It was an auxiliary to his logic, an exemplication of Dugald Stewart's remark on the intimate relation between the imagination and the reasoning faculty in a well-balanced mind. Its scintillations were the sparkles that flew about the anvil on which his logic plied its strokes. His sermons, if examined in print, would pass for good, but "second-rate" productions; that is to say, they would rank below those of Chalmers, Channing, Robert Hall, or Olin, not to speak of the majestic productions of the great French preachers; but if heard from his own lips in the pulpit, the hearer, even the educated and critical hearer, inspired by the preacher's manner and sensibility, would be disposed to assign them to the "first" class. His style, not being formed from books, was the natural expression of his vigorous and exact intellect; it was therefore remarkable for its simplicity and terseness, its Saxon purity and energy. A meretricious sentence cannot be found in all his published writings.

He was not a metaphysician, nor a dialectician, and yet by natural disposition he was a polemic. This was a marked propensity of his mind; it was never abused into gladiatorship in the pulpit, but inclined him almost incessantly to theological discussion out of it. A jealous regard for the truth doubtless prompted it; but it had a deeper foundation; it was founded in his mental constitution. His polemical writings were not only in good temper, but models of luminous and forcible argumentation. His sermon on Calvinism may be referred to as an example. That discourse, with his

sermon and lectures on Universalism, his essays on the New Haven Divinity, his sermon on the Law and the Gospel, his tract in reply to Pierrepont on the Atonement, etc., would form a volume which the Church might preserve as no ignoble memorial of both his intellectual and moral character. His Travels in Europe, though containing some examples of elaborate reflection and picturesque description, was not a volume of superior claims; it had too much of the ordinary guide-book character.

That very significant and convenient word, tact, expresses a quality which Wilbur Fisk possessed in a rare degree. He was uncommonly sagacious in perceiving, and prompt in seizing the practical advantages of his position, whatever it might be; hence his adroitness in controversy, the success of his platform addresses, his almost certain triumph in Conference debates, and the skill of his public practical schemes.

His moral character was as perfect as that of any man whom it has been the writer's happiness to know. His intimate friends will admit that there is hardly a possibility of speaking too favorably of him in this respect. It has often been remarked by those who had years of personal relations with him, that they were literally at a loss to mention one moral defect that marred the perfect beauty of his nature. This is saying very much; it is saying what cannot be said of one man perhaps in a million, but it can be deliberately said of this saintly man. Serene, cheerful; exempt from selfishness, pride, and vanity; tender, yet manly in his sensibilities; confiding in his friendships; entertaining hopeful views of Divine Providence and the destiny of man; maintaining the purest and yet the most inelaborate piety, a piety that appeared to believe and enjoy and do all things

good, and yet to "be careful for nothing;" he seemed to combine the distinctive charms that endear to us the beautiful characters of Fenelon and Channing, Edwards and Fletcher of Madeley. His humility was profound, and surrounded him with a halo of moral loveliness It was not a burden of penance under which the soul bowed with self-cherished agony, still less was it a "voluntary humility," an assumed self-abasement; but it seemed the spontaneous and tender demeanor of his spirit; it mingled with the cheerful play of his features, and gave a hallowed suavity to his very tones. It was his rare moral character, more even than his intellectual eminence, that gave him such magical influence over other minds, and rendered him so successful in the government of literary institutions. All about him felt self-respect in respecting him. To offend him was a self-infliction which even the audacity of reckless youth could not brook.

He lived for many years in the faith and exemplification of St. Paul's sublime doctrine of Christian perfection. He prized that great tenet as one of the most important distinctions of Christianity. His own experience respecting it was marked by signal circumstances, and from the day that he practically adopted it till he triumphed over death, its impress was radiant on his daily life. With John Wesley he deemed this important truth — promulgated, in any very express form, almost solely by Methodism in these days—to be one of the most solemn responsibilities of his Church, the most potent element in the experimental divinity of the Scriptures. In his earlier religious history he had felt the influence of those temptations which have betrayed so many young men from the Methodist ministry into other communions, where better worldly

auspices, rather than better means of self-development or usefulness, were to be found; but when he received the baptism of this great grace, his purified heart could not sufficiently utter its thankfulness that he had been providentially kept within the pale of a Church which clearly taught it. This alone was a denominational distinction sufficiently important to be set off against any drawback that Methodism might present. In a letter to a brother clergyman he expressed, with overflowing feelings, his renewed love of the Church. "I thank God," he said, "that I ever saw this day. I love our Church better than ever. How glad am I that I never left it." There are two periods at which a Methodist assuredly feels no regret for his connection with the denomination: when he learns by experience what is the meaning of its instructions respecting the highest Christian life, and when death dismisses him from its communion to the Church triumphant.

On the twenty-second of February, 1839, in the forty-eighth year of his age, Wilbur Fisk received that dismission. His chamber had been for days sanctified, as it were, by the glory of the Divine Presence, and his broken utterances were full of consolation, and triumph over death. "Glorious hope!" was the last and whispered expression of his religious feelings.

Another name has been mentioned, among the additions to the New England ministry, in this period, which has become as familiar to eastern Methodists as that of Fisk, and which claims here further attention, though it pertains more fully to subsequent dates of the Church; the name of a man whose life, like that of not a few others in the Methodist itinerancy, forces upon the historian the suspicion, not to say the discredit, of writing "romance" rather than fact.

During the last war between England and the United States lived, in an obscure suburb of the city of Boston, a poor but devoted English woman, who, having lost her husband soon after her emigration, depended for her subsistence on the earnings of her needle. Her neighbors were of the lowest class, ignorant and vicious. She felt, in her poverty and toils, that God might have cast her lot in these unfavorable circumstances for some good purpose, and began zealously to plan for the religious improvement of her neighborhood. Among other means, she opened her small front room several times a week for a prayer-meeting, and procured the aid of her Methodist associates in conducting it. Much of the good seed thus scattered with a faith that hoped against hope, and in a soil that seemed utterly arid, produced good fruit. Among the attendants at the evening meeting was a young mariner, with an intellectual eye, a prepossessing countenance, and the generous susceptibilities of a sailor's heart. Amid the corruptions of his associates he had been noted for his temperance and excellent disposition. And yet this child of the sea had been a wanderer on its waves from his earliest years. He could scarcely trace the tie of a single family relation on earth, and had known no other friends than the ever-varying, but true-hearted companionships of the forecastle. A natural superiority of head and heart had raised him above the moral perils of his lot. His fine traits interested much the English Methodist and her religious friends, and they could not see why God would not make some use of him among his comrades. He had received no education, but could read imperfectly. She hoped that Providence would in some way provide for his future instruction; but in the midst of her anticipations he

was suddenly summoned away to sea. He had been out but a short time when the vessel was seized by a British ship, and carried into Halifax, where the crew suffered a long and wretched imprisonment.

A year had passed away, during which the good woman had heard nothing of the young mariner. Her hopes of him were abandoned as extravagant, in view of his unsettled mode of life, and its peculiar impediments to his improvement. Still she remembered and prayed for him with the solicitude of a mother. About this time she received a letter from her kindred who had settled in Halifax, on business which required her to visit that town. While there her habitual disposition to be useful led her, with a few friends, to visit the prison with Tracts. In one apartment were the American prisoners; as she approached the grated door a voice shouted her name, calling her mother, and a youth beckoned and leaped for joy at the grate. It was the lost sailor boy. They wept and conversed like mother and son, and when she left she gave him a Bible, his future guide and comfort. During her stay at Halifax she constantly visited the prison, supplying him with religious books, and clothing, and endeavoring, by her conversation, to strengthen the religious impressions made on his mind in Boston. After some months she removed to a distant part of the province, and for years she heard nothing more of the youth.

It was her happiness to reside again in Boston, in advanced life, and to find her "sailor boy" the chief attraction of its pulpit, in times when Channing, the elder Beecher, Wainwright, and other men of national reputation, were its ornaments. Such was the beginning of the long and eminent ministry of Edward T. Taylor,[1] a

[1] Sketches and Incidents, etc., p. 342. New York, 1843.

man whose fame for genius and usefulness became general, whose extraordinary character has been sketched in our periodicals, and the books of transatlantic visitors,[5] as one of the so-called "lions" of the city, whom a distinguished critic has pronounced the greatest poet of the land, though unable to write a stanza; and a mayor of Boston has publicly declared to be a more effectual protector of the peace of the most degraded parts of the city than any hundred policemen.

In a spacious and substantial chapel, crowded about by the worst habitations of the city, he delivered every Sabbath, for years, discourses the most extraordinary, to assemblies also as extraordinary perhaps as could be found in the Christian world. In the center column of seats, guarded sacredly against all other intrusion, sat a dense mass of mariners—a strange medley of white, black, and olive—Protestant, Catholic, and sometimes pagan, representing many languages, unable, probably, to comprehend each other's vocal speech, but speaking there the same language of intense looks and flowing tears. On the other seats, in the galleries, the aisles, the altar, and on the pulpit stairs, crowded, week after week, and year after year, (among the families of sailors, and the poor who had no other temple,) the *élite* of the city, the learned professor, the student, the popular writer, the actor, groups of clergymen, and the votaries of fashion, listening with throbbing hearts and wet eyes to the man whose chief training had been in the forecastle, whose only endowments were those of grace and nature, but whose discourses presented the strangest, the most brilliant exhibition of sense, epigrammatic thought, pathos, and humor, expressed in a style of

[5] See the American Travels of Miss Martineau, Buckingham, Miss Bremer, Mrs. Jameison, and Dickens

singular pertinency, spangled over by an exhaustless variety of the finest images, and pervaded by a spiritual earnestness that subdued all listeners; a man who could scarcely speak three sentences, in the pulpit or out of it, without presenting a striking poetical image, a phrase of rare beauty, or a sententious sarcasm, and the living examples of whose usefulness are scattered over the seas.

He was born in Richmond, Va., about 1793; entered the American naval service as surgeon's boy in his childhood; was some time in the Spanish navy in the Mexican waters; served again in the American navy at New Orleans; went to Boston, where he joined a privateer in the war of 1812, and was taken prisoner by a British frigate while pursuing a British brig. After an imprisonment of six months he returned to Boston, and, under the ministrations of Hedding and Sabin, began his Methodist career. By the aid of the Methodist layman, Colonel Binney, he had three months' instruction at New Market (N. H.) Seminary, the only academic education of his life.

His name appears in the Minutes, for the first time, in 1819, when he was received into the New England Conference, and appointed to Scituate Circuit, among his own seafaring people, under the presiding eldership of Pickering; it embraced seven towns. In 1820 he was at Falmouth and Sandwich; in 1821 at Sandwich and Harwich; 1822 Harwich and Barnstable; 1823 Fairhaven and New Bedford; 1824 Martha's Vineyard; 1825 Milford; 1826 Bristol; 1827 and 1828 Fall River and Little Compton. In his rapidly changed appointments he had a good initiation to the labors and trials of the itinerancy. His extraordinary and somewhat eccentric genius had attracted great congregations; but he had

been found chiefly useful among seamen; the Church therefore, with its usual policy of placing the right man in the right place, commissioned him, in 1829, as chaplain to mariners in the metropolis of New England. His impression on the public mind of Boston was immediate and most vivid. The high culture of many of its citizens fitted them the better to appreciate the unquestionable genius and marvelous eloquence of the uncultivated preacher. He projected a mariner's Church, and, after he had labored hard in other parts of the country to collect funds for its erection, the people of Boston, without regard to sectarian distinctions, took it in hand, completed it, effectively endowed it, and gave it a "Mariner's Home," thus securing to the preacher a lifelong sphere of remarkable power to which the Church has ever since annually appointed him.[6]

During most of this period, down to 1816, when he was appointed to the Book Concern, New York, Joshua Soule was the chief itinerant in Maine, traveling, in the outset, its only district, which comprehended all its Methodist territory; with Taylor, Munger, Heath, Hilman, Baker, Fogg, Kibby, Virgin, Ruter, Newell, and similar men under him. The whole state was now resounding with the sound of the gospel by their

[6] A Boston Journal, (Z. Herald, May 8, 1867,) alluding to the Methodist ministry of the city, says: "One of their number has been the center of more idolatry on the part of the Areopagites of this Athens, as long as his strength allowed him to preach, than any of their own gods. Horace Mann joins in with Dr. Channing in his laudation; and the only elaborate eulogy of a minister ever drawn from the pen of their heresiarch, Emerson, was paid to this master workman. No name in this city's clerical annals, not that of Cotton Mather, Matthew Byles, Peter Thacher, or Lyman Beecher, will be more historic, or more justly so, for wit, imagination, and oratory, the highest gifts of intellect, no less than of the heart, than the name of Edward T Taylor."

ministrations. A second district was formed, with Portland for its headquarters, in 1806, and commanded by Oliver Beale, a saintly man, of unwavering zeal and long-continued services, who became one of the principal founders of the Church in the extreme East. Soule's single district, with its thirteen circuits, and two thousand one hundred members, became, by the end of the period, three districts and twenty-seven circuits, with more than six thousand members.

Hedding labored during these times in Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine, mostly on immense districts, which extended over several of the states. About midway of the period he thus reviews his work: "I have averaged over three thousand miles' travel a year, and preached on an average a sermon a day since I commenced the itinerant life. During that period I have traveled circuits and districts that joined each other, through a tract of country beginning near Troy, N. Y., and going north into Canada; thence east, through Vermont and New Hampshire; and thence southerly, through Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, to Long Island Sound. I have never in this time owned a traveling vehicle, but have ridden on horseback, except occasionally in winter, when I have borrowed a sleigh, and also a few instances in which I have traveled by public conveyance or a borrowed carriage. I have both labored hard and fared hard. Much of the time I have done missionary work without missionary money. Until recently I have had no dwelling-place or home; but, as a wayfaring man, lodged from night to night where hospitality and friendship opened the way. In most of these regions the Methodists were few, and compara-

tively poor. I was often obliged to depend upon poor people for food and lodging and horse-keeping, and though in general they provided for me cheerfully and willingly, yet I often felt that I was taking what they needed for their children, and that my horse was eating what they needed for their own beasts. I have suffered great trials of mind on this account, and have traveled many a day in summer and winter without dinner, because I had not a quarter of a dollar that I could spare to buy it. Through nearly all this region there existed strong prejudices against the Methodists, which greatly hindered their influence and usefulness. The principal objection was on account of their doctrines. They were regarded by many as heretics in theology. They were also despised and ridiculed on account of their poverty. The Methodist preachers were often represented as exceedingly ignorant and incompetent men. The itinerant system was also another ground of objection. The circuit preacher, coming as a stranger to a new people, would often find himself beset with the most scandalous reports of crimes and shameful acts, which it was alleged he had been guilty of on former circuits, and thus the enemies of Methodism would seek to undermine his influence and destroy his usefulness. Such are some of the difficulties the Methodist preachers have been compelled to encounter, especially in New England, during the past ten years. But notwithstanding all, God has been with us, and given us favor in the eyes of the people, and great success in building up his Church. Revivals have spread through all the country, and multitudes have been added to the little and despised flock; nay, many who were once the greatest enemies of Methodism, and especially of Methodist preachers, have

been converted, and are now become their greatest and truest friends."[7]

Pickering labored mostly about Boston, and on the Boston District as presiding elder, his field in the latter appointment extending from the end of Cape Cod to Providence, R. I., from Marblehead to the interior of New Hampshire; Kibby, Snelling, Webb, Munger, Merwin, Kent, Hyde, Merrill, Sabin, Brodhead, Lindsey, and many more such men, being under his command. Ruter, returning from his Canadian labors, traveled in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine, but mostly in New Hampshire, where he followed Hedding in 1809, on a district so large that it bore the name of the state. His self-culture was a remarkable example of the "acquisition of knowledge under difficulties," for, with all the hardships of the itinerancy, he had now become a scholarly man. His influence was important in promoting studious habits among the preachers, and, toward the end of the period, he helped to found the first Methodist academy of New England, at Newmarket, N. H., and became its first principal. The General Conference of 1820, by appointing him to the Book Concern, Cincinnati, closed his New England career; thereafter he was to tend westward, continually growing in eminence as a preacher, educator, writer, to be crowned at last by death as a pioneer missionary in the farthest southwest.

New Hampshire's single district, with its five circuits, nine preachers, and one thousand members of 1804, was to double all its numerical force before the close of these years. The period began in Vermont with some five circuits, seven preachers, and a few scattered members, under the presiding eldership of Joseph Crawford, whose

[7] Bishop Clark's Life of Hedding, p. 202. New York, 1855.

district extended into Massachusetts, on the one hand, and Canada on the other. It closed there with fully doubled strength.[8] The two districts which comprehended the earlier occupied fields — Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut—at its beginning, much more than doubled all their statistics by its close.

[8] Districts and circuits of New York Conference extended into all Western New England, and render it next to impossible to estimate correctly the Methodist statistics of the latter.

CHAPTER VII.

ASBURY AND LEE IN THE EAST.

Asbury in the East — His Views of New England — At Buxton Conference, Maine — Great Religious Excitement — At Lynn, Mass. — Characters of Preachers — Great Revival — At Canaan, N. H. — Travels and Labors — At Boston — The First Conference there — At New London, Conn. — Increasing Prosperity — Newport, R. I. — Captain Beale — At Boston — Conference at Monmouth, Me. — At Pittsfield, Mass. — At Winchester, N. H. — Lee Revisits the East — Scenes on his Route — Final Views of New England Methodism — Deaths of Preachers — Statistical Progress.

Asbury traversed New England each of these years down to the last before that of his death. He always approached it with peculiar feelings; with mingled repugnance and hopefulness. He seemed there as in a foreign land, while all the rest of the nation was his familiar domain. Everywhere else he was welcomed by enthusiastic throngs; there he was repelled, and pursued his solitary journies comparatively a stranger, finding refuge in families which were proscribed as heretical by public opinion, and in "meetings" which were impeached as fanatical "conventicles." Yet he believed that Methodism would "radiate" over these elder communities. "I feel," he writes, "as if God will work in these states and give us a great harvest; a glorious work of God will be wrought here. Surely we shall rise in New England in the next generation." He lived to see the verification of his prediction. To him the religious life of New England presented an example of the rigid Hebrew legalism, strangely combined with the specula-

tive dogmatism of the early Greek Church, but unrelieved by the spiritual mysticism of the latter, and nearly destitute of the vital charity and joyousness of the primitive faith. Its distinctive theology he literally detested; it seemed to him to bind, as in iron bands, the souls of the people; depressing, by its tenets of election and reprobation, with uncomplaining but profound distress, scrupulous, timid, and therefore often the best consciences; inflating the confidence and pharisaism of the self-reliant or self-conceited, who assumed their predestination to heaven; enforcing the morality without the gracious consolation of religion; and giving to the recklessly immoral an apology for their lives in their very demoralization, their lack of "effectual grace," of "an effectual call." Devout Augustinian theologians would not indeed admit his logic; such was nevertheless his honest estimate of the New England Church, and he continually returned to the East, directing the best energies of Methodism against its traditional beliefs and ecclesiastical stagnancy.

There, more than anywhere else, we have to regret the scantiness of his journals, for there, in his hardest field, his reflections as well as his facts would be most interesting to us. He re-entered it in the spring of 1804, and on the fourteenth of July opened the New England Conference at Buxton, Me. The ordination was held in a wood, where the bishop preached from a haycart. He describes the occasion as "an open time." "The work of God broke forth," he says, "on the right and on the left." A great sensation spread among the multitude, and before the session closed it was estimated that fifty persons were converted. Snelling says, "There was a greater display

of divine power at this Conference than any I ever attended. Many of the people were wrought upon in a very powerful manner; but, as is generally the case, there was some opposition. At one meeting a man, appearing to be in a violent passion, came in, and called for his wife, bidding her leave immediately. She urged him to stay a little longer. 'No,' said he; 'let us go.' He then started to go, but paused a few moments, then turned back, fell upon his knees, and prayed for mercy as earnestly as any. The preachers were placed in different directions in the grove, praying and exhorting. The people would gather around them in companies, similar to what are called praying circles at camp-meetings. In the circle which I was in there were eleven persons who professed to be brought from darkness to light, besides many others who were inquiring what they must do to be saved."[1] "It was," wrote Joshua Taylor, "the greatest time that we have seen in New England."

Eighty-one preachers were appointed to six districts and fifty-two circuits. They had gained in the last year one district and four circuits. The ensuing year was prosperous, and gave, at the next Conference, an aggregate of eight thousand five hundred and forty, an increase of seven hundred and sixteen. If we add the returns of New England circuits which belonged to the New York Conference, the total membership of the Eastern states amounted to ten thousand eight hundred and fifty-two, with a gain of four circuits and seven preachers.

Asbury was back again, at the Conference of July 12, 1805, in Lynn, Mass. Nearly fifty preachers were present. The records of this session afford abundant

[1] Memorials, etc., second series, p. 254.

evidence of the vigilance of the Conference over its members. The notices appended to the names which passed under review are remarkable for their brevity, but also for their frankness. One candidate is pronounced "useful, firm, perhaps obstinate, contentious, well meaning." Another is said to be "useful, but unguarded in some expressions;" he seems to have been somewhat in advance of his times, for there was "some objection on his denial of visions and spiritual influences by dreams," though he "averred his firm belief of the Scriptures in these respects." Another is said to be "unexceptionable, useful, and devout;" another, "pious, unimproved, impatient of reproof, not acceptable," and is ordered to "desist from traveling." One is recorded to be "sick, near to death, happy." Another is charged gravely for marrying indiscreetly, and "suspended one year from performing the functions of a deacon;" another is pronounced "weak in doctrine and discipline, but as a preacher useful, sincere, pious." Bates is said to be "plain, good, useful;" Lyon, "pious, faithful, but of small improvement;" Young, "pious, capable, rough, improving;" Willard, "faithful, diligent." One is said to be "acceptable, useful, zealous – perhaps indiscreetly so—sincere, ingenious;" another, "pious, useful, weak."

Asbury says: "We had a full Conference; preaching at five, at eleven, and at eight o'clock; sitting of Conference from half past eight o'clock until eleven in the forenoon, and from two until six in the afternoon. We had great order and harmony, and strict discipline withal. Sixteen deacons and eight elders were ordained."

The Sabbath, as usual at the early Conferences, was a day of extraordinary interest. A great multitude assem-

oled from the surrounding regions. The public exercises were held in a grove belonging to Benjamin Johnson, the first Methodist of Lynn; "a beautiful sequestered spot," says Asbury, "though near the meeting-house." The bishop preached, with much effect, from 1 Thess. ii, 6–9, a passage which appositely described the Methodist ministry: "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us," etc. A remarkable impression was produced by these services. "There were," says Asbury, "many exhortations and much prayer. From this day forth the work of God will prosper in Lynn and its neighborhood." Old Methodists in the vicinity long recalled that interesting day. It is said that the multitudes bowed under the force of the word like the forest before the tempest. Scores were awakened; many fell to the earth overpowered by their emotions, and the preachers were summoned late at night from their sleep to console and counsel those who, with broken and contrite hearts, continued to call upon God at their homes.[2] On Monday "the labors of Conference and public religious exercises were continued," writes the bishop; "on Tuesday evening Conference rose in great peace. On Wednesday I gave them a sermon, and immediately set out for Waltham, twenty miles; wind, heat, dust." He passed on rapidly to New Rochelle, where he "lodged under the hospitable roof of the Widow Sherwood," one of his most favorite

[2] Bishop Hedding to the author.

homes. He had traveled two hundred and thirty miles in six days. "I am still," he writes, "bent on great designs for God, for Christ, for souls." Pursuing, with unslacking energies, these "great designs," he again passes from our view, on his route westward as far as Tennessee, and southward as far as Georgia.

But in May of 1806 he is proclaiming the word again in New Haven. With daily preaching he reaches Boston, and rejoices to see its second Methodist church (on Bromfield-street) nearly built, "sixty-four by eighty-four feet;" "the upper window frames put in." By the fifth of June he is at a camp-meeting at Buxton, Me. "At two o'clock we came on the ground," he writes; "there were twenty preachers, traveling and local. Saturday, 6, I preached, and on Sunday also. Some judged there were about five thousand people on the ground. There were displays of divine power, and some conversions. Our journey into Maine has been through dust and heat, in toil of body, and in extraordinary temptation of soul; but I felt that our way was of God." On Wednesday, 11, he arrived at Canaan, N. H., where the New England Conference commenced its session the next day. About forty-four members were present, besides probationers and visitors. The Conference comprised more than half a hundred preachers, and presented an aspect not only of numerical, but of no little moral and intellectual strength. It included several men of force and talent, among whom were Hedding, Soule, Pickering, Ostrander, Brodhead, Jayne, Webb, Sabin, and Ruter. Asbury says: "We went through our business with haste and peace, sitting seven hours a day." Their financial accounts, at all these early sessions, show that most of them received but a small proportion of their meager "allowance." The

"deficiencies" were reported, and they were fearful. A small dividend from the Book Concern, and a smaller one from the "Chartered Fund," gave them slight relief. Year after year "a donation" from the Baltimore Conference, usually its entire dividend from the Book Concern, is recorded as sent on in the hands of Asbury. That generous Conference had given the first itinerants to the East, had continued to reinforce them from its best men, and now shared with them, from year to year, its scanty financial resources.

"On Sunday, 15, I ordained," says Asbury, "eleven elders in the woods. At three o'clock I preached in the meeting-house; it was a season of power." The next day he was on his route westward. He was at Burlington, Vt., on Saturday, after a ride, during the day, of forty miles. "I am resolved," he there wrote, "to be in every part of the work while I live, to preside. I feel as if I was fully taught the necessity of being made perfect through sufferings and labors. I pass over in silence cases of pain and grief of body and mind. On the Sabbath I preached in an upper room at Fuller's, to about four hundred people. My subject was Luke iv, 18, 19, and God bore witness to his own word. Why did I not visit this country sooner? Ah, what is the toil of beating over rocks, hills, mountains, and deserts, five thousand miles a year? Nothing, when we reflect it is done for God, for Christ, for the Church of God, the souls of poor sinners, the preachers of the gospel in the seven Conferences, one hundred and thirty thousand members, and one or two millions, who congregate with us in the solemn worship of God; O it is nothing!"

On Monday he was again away. He preached at Vergennes and Bridport during the day, and at Hamp

ton the day following. Sabbath, the 28th, he spent at a camp-meeting in Sharon, Conn., the results of which he speaks of as important. "We had," he writes, "abundant spiritual harvests. Glory to God!" On July 2, he reached New York city. He had been accompanied through New England by Joseph Crawford, "who now," he says, "came over the ferry with me. When about to part he turned away his face and wept. Ah, I am not made for such scenes! I felt exquisite pain." This strong man, armed, carried under his cuirass of strength the sensitive affections of a child.

New England now had eight districts and part of a ninth, sixty-four circuits and stations, and ninety-seven preachers. It had gained in a year two districts, eight circuits, and nine preachers.

In May, 1807, Asbury entered the East again by way of Vermont, accompanied now by Daniel Hitt as his traveling companion. They pressed forward into Maine, and thence southward to Boston, where, on the first of June, he met the Conference. It sat through the whole week, and was the first session in the New England metropolis; a bold attitude for the struggling cause in its combined ministerial strength. It had now two Churches in the city, and more than a hundred preachers and about thirteen thousand members in the eastern states. It had gained one thousand two hundred members the last year. The Conference had reaching five times a day, and fifty-nine candidates were ordained at the two humble Boston altars. It was a prophetic week for New England. Baltimore again sends three hundred dollars, her Book Concern dividend, for the suffering itinerants, for, though growing vigorously every year, they are still poor in money. After all collected funds and donations are handed in,

the Conference is nearly three thousand dollars insolvent.

On Saturday Asbury refreshed them by reading letters from Delaware and Virginia, giving accounts of remarkable revivals in those sections of the Church. The business of the session was then concluded, and "an hour or two was spent in conversing on the state of the Lord's work among the people under our charge, and our own souls," says the secretary. Asbury read the appointments, and the itinerants were the same day pursuing their way on horseback, some in groups, some alone, to their scattered posts of labor. The bishop immediately departed for "the pleasant town of Lynn," where he preached on the Sabbath. On Monday he shook hands with his Waltham friends at the home of Bemis, but was away the same day. On Tuesday he reached Wilbraham, "in spite of heat and lameness." "I am in peace," he writes; "I dare not murmur, though in pain." On Tuesday, 12, he was on Pittsfield Circuit. "Methodism," he writes, "prevails in this quarter. In two societies two hundred members have been added." On Saturday, by "a great ride of forty miles," he entered the state of New York "faint, sick, and lame," his "feet much swelled," and he can walk only "on crutches." Thus he pressed on in his course over the continent, aged and debilitated, but advancing daily.

Early in the spring of 1808 he returned to New York, after a fatiguing tour in the South, and more than five thousand miles travel within the preceding twelve months. "O my soul, rest in God!" he exclaims as he journeys onward. "I hear and see and feel many serious things; but I must take care of my own soul. My care is to love, to suffer, and to please God." He

arrived, by forced rides, on Friday, 15th of April, at New London, Conn. "My last two days' rides," he remarks the next day, "were severe. My flesh is not brass, nor my old bones iron; but I was in peace and communion with the Father and the Son." On Sunday he preached in the Baptist chapel; it was more capacious than the Methodist house, and the Church which occupied it very generously exchanged it for the latter.

The session began on Monday, the eighteenth, with forty preachers, besides the probationers. There is no account extant of the financial affairs of the Conference. A brief allusion in the records indicates that Asbury brought the usual donation from Baltimore. Doubtless the deficit was as great, if not greater, than heretofore, for Martin Ruter "draughted an address to the brethren requesting their charity for the distressed traveling preachers." Asbury says: "The Conference sat till Friday. We wrought in haste, in great order, and in peace, through a great deal of business. There were seventeen deacons, traveling and local, ordained, and nine elders ordained in the Congregational Church before fifteen hundred or two thousand witnesses. I know not where large congregations are so orderly as in the Eastern States. There was a work of God going on during the sitting of the Conference. The General Conference hastened our breaking up, the delegates thereto requesting leave to go. There were deficiencies in money matters, but no complaints." The bishop departed immediately after the adjournment. On Tuesday, 26, after a ride of thirty-eight miles in a rain-storm, he arrived in New York city. "I feel," he writes, "my shoulders eased a little now that I have met the seven Conferences. I have lived to minute five hundred and fifty-two preachers in this country. The increase this

short year is seven thousand five hundred members in round numbers."

The ensuing year was one of great success, though of some local drawbacks. In Maine Joshua Soule and Oliver Beale guided, with much success, the labors of twenty-two itinerants, among whom were Hillman, Munger, Cobb, Martin, Steele, Kilburn, and Fogg. They added two circuits to their already extensive field, and more than four hundred members to their classes. The joint returns of the two districts of the province amounted to three thousand two hundred and twenty-four. Elijah Hedding concluded his labors this year on the New Hampshire District, where he had superintended the travels of William Hunt, Lewis Bates, Ebenezer Blake, and others. They passed through severe struggles and privations, and made no remarkable progress. The gains of the district fell short of fifty. An additional circuit had, however, been formed.

Elijah R. Sabin superintended the New London District with success. Bonney, Lambord, Washburn, Clark, and some seven others, traveled under his supervision. They reported a membership of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, and had increased more than three hundred during the year. The session of the Conference at New London left a deep impression upon that city. A "reformation" ensued, which lasted through most of the year, and spread over much of the district. John Brodhead had charge of nearly a score of laborers on Boston District, among whom were Pickering, (who traveled this year as a missionary,) Webb, Ruter, Merrill, Kibby, and Merwin. They enlarged their field on every hand, and returned two thousand and forty-five members, an increase during the year of four hundred

and sixty-one. There were now three hundred and thirty-seven Methodists in the metropolis. On Ashgrove and Rhinebeck Districts there were also large additions. Almost every circuit reported gains. The membership of the New England Conference proper amounted, at the close of the year, to 10,096; it had advanced 1,271 since the previous returns. If we add the returns of the New England circuits pertaining to the New York Conference, the aggregate number of Methodists in the eastern states, exclusive of the preachers, amounted to 15,798, and the aggregate increase of the year to 1,968, the largest gain of any one year since the introduction of Methodism into New England.

Accompanied by Henry Boehm, Asbury was again in the East in May, 1809. On Monday, the 18th, he was at Norwalk, Conn., where he preached, and stirred up the young Church to build a chapel. They were "poor," it was alleged. "Poor may they ever be," was his reply. "I must needs preach in New London. I gave them a discourse on 1 John ii, 6. The house was soon filled, and many went away who could not get in; surely the society, and preachers too, have been blind to their own interests, or they would have occupied every foot of ground; but we have never taken advantage of circumstances as they offered in this place, and have lost by our negligence. We crossed Narraganset Bay on Friday, and came into Newport. Grand house, steeple, pews, by lottery; the end is to sanctify the means. Ah, what pliability to evil!" He dreaded such innovations in Methodism. "I spoke," he adds, "with difficulty, and with little order in my discourses. From New York thus far we have had dust and rough roads, and I have been much tired and greatly blessed. We have rode two hundred miles in six days." The

next day he visited Capt. Beale, at Fort Wolcott. The captain was a good Methodist, and one of the chief founders of the society in Newport. Asbury preached to his garrison, "baptized some children, visited the school, prayed with the sick in the hospital, exhorted the poor sinners to turn to God; but ah, I might have said and done more. Here I saw discipline, order, correctness; it was grand and pleasing. What changes I pass through! How hardly shall they who travel much keep a constant eye on duty, the cross, holiness, and God!" He pushed on, rejoicing at many indications of prosperity, but lamenting also, with perhaps unfounded apprehension, over what he deemed evidences of declension. "On Tuesday, 30," he writes, "we came to the pleasant town of Bristol. The Methodists here have a house with pews, and a preacher who has not half enough to do. Poor work! I gave them a discourse on 1 Cor. xv, 58. I have as much as I can bear in body and mind. I see what has been doing for nine years past to make Presbyterian Methodists."

On Saturday he reached Boston, and the next day, though too feeble to stand in the pulpit, he preached twice. "Had I not," he says, "spoken sitting, pain and weariness would have prevented my finishing. May the Lord water his own word! I hear of a considerable revival in several places." On Monday he reached the mansion of Bemis, at Waltham, "dripping wet." "I found," he writes, "the four generations in health, and I got (O how sweet!) a comfortable night's sleep, the first I have had for many nights." By Thursday, the 15th of June, he had arrived at Monmouth, Me., where, on that day, he opened the New England Conference. M'Kendree was present, but we have no notice of the share he took in the proceedings. On

Monday, June 19th, the session closed committees, of which there were yet but two or three, reported, and the devoted band of itinerants, about again to scatter to all parts of their widely-extended field, "spent an hour and a half in relating their former experiences and present exercises." Martin Ruter, by request of the bishops, read the appointments, and, by night, many of them were on their way to the conflicts of another year. On Sunday, before the adjournment, Asbury preached to a great throng, estimated at three thousand, from Isaiah's exultant words: "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it, etc., for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Isa. xliv, 23. "It was," he says, "an open season." "We have ordained," he remarks, "twenty-one deacons, and seven elders. We have located eleven elders, readmitted one, and added seventeen preachers upon trial. There is a small increase here, and there are fair prospects for the future. I am kept in peace."

The day following the adjournment he departed westward. On Saturday, 24th, he reached Danville, Vt., and, though quite exhausted with fatigue and feebleness, preached on the morrow in the court-house. He had to sit during the discourse. "From New York to Danville," he writes, "we compute our ride to have been seven hundred miles." On Tuesday he again preached, but at the village chapel this time. Two of his itinerant brethren were with him. Being too feeble to go into the pulpit, he took his position in a pew near it, and thence addressed the assembly from Heb. iii, 12–14 His congregations were large, and the court, which was in session, invited him to preach before it; but "I had no strength and no time for this," he remarks. He was on his route the same day. On Friday,

30th, he was on the shore of Lake Champlain. "I preached," he writes, "at Fuller's, from Titus iii, 7, 8. Here I ordained Joseph Sampson, a native of Canada, and sent him a missionary to his countrymen." He adds, prophetically, "The day of small things will be great; but the time is not yet come; rather, it is still afar off. Patience, my soul!" He passed into New York, and thence westward and southward.

Again we find him (May 18, 1810) entering the East by way of Vermont, and on the 20th preaching in Pittsfield, Mass., where the New York Conference assembled the next day, for much of its territory was still within the New England states. "Bishop M'Kendree," he writes, "spoke in the afternoon; his subject was well chosen and well improved. There was also a prayer-meeting, and in the Congregational house George Pickering preached. We sat in Conference until Saturday. Among the ordinations was that of Stephen Bamford, recommended from Nova Scotia for elder's orders. We have stationed eighty-four preachers, sent two missionaries, one to Michigan, and one to Detroit. There was a considerable deficiency in our funds, which left the unmarried preachers a very small pittance." From Pittsfield he passed to Winchester, N. H., where the New England Conference was held in the Congregational Church, the preachers meanwhile holding a camp-meeting within three miles. "There was," he says, "a work of God manifestly, and opposition rose powerfully. We regretted we could not stay two days more." He hastened to Boston, thence to Newport, and back through Rhode Island and Connecticut to New York, "sounding the alarm" all the way.

Such are glimpses of his visits to New England, down to the end of the first decade of the century, a monoton

ous record, but with a monotony of incredible labors. His whole life was a monotony of wonders. His records of his subsequent tours in the East are hardly more than allusions, except in one instance. He sees the possibility of a great future, but grieves over the encroachments of pews, steeples, musical instruments. In his last visit he can hardly attend the Conference. Pickering presides for him. He is old and worn out, and in a few months must die.

Lee once more passed over the scene. After an absence of eight years in the South he was anxious to revisit his early eastern battle-fields, and see how the contest still went on. His passage was a humble but exultant religious ovation. Many changes had occurred since his departure. Methodism had enlarged its tents and strengthened its stakes on all hands, and most of its preachers had commenced their travels in this interval. He proposed now to greet his old friends, and take his final leave of them till they should meet again in the "building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He lingered on his route toward the North, visiting and preaching among the Churches, till the latter part of June, 1808, when, crossing the Sound, he landed at Norwalk, Conn., the village on whose highway he had preached his first sermon in New England. "He was much gratified," says his biographer, "in saluting, in the name of the Lord Jesus, some of his friends of former days. Almost twenty years had passed away since he first, as a stranger, entered this part of the world." On Saturday, July 2, he is at Stratfield, where he had formed his first New England class. The little flock assemble and receive his final counsels. After praying with them he hastens to New Haven, where he spends the Sunday,

preaching three times to weeping congregations. By the next Saturday he reaches his old friend, General Lippett's home, Cranston, R. I., and on Sunday has "another precious time of the love and presence of God." Through Providence and Bristol he passes to Newport, where Merwin is stationed, and meets good Captain Beale, "who commands the fort, and is a steady Methodist." He preaches there repeatedly to crowded and sobbing assemblies. "I warned them," he writes, "and entreated them, as though I never more were to see them." With tears and benedictions and last farewells all along his route he reaches Boston on Thursday, the 21st, and finds the same evening a congregation ready to hear him in the old church, and another, the next night, in the new. By Saturday he is with his first society, in Massachusetts, at Lynn. They call on him at the parsonage in the evening. The next day being the Sabbath he preaches to them in the morning, with much effect, from Isa. xxxiii, 13. "It was," he writes, "an affecting time. At three o'clock I preached again, and the house was much thronged. The Lord was with us. And also at six o'clock my soul was much comforted in speaking to the people, and many wept under the word. When I put the brethren in mind of my first coming among them, and the difficulties that I, as well as they, had to go through, they could not forbear weeping. I could but hope that a blessing would follow that meeting. I have not been so well pleased for a long time at meeting my old friends as I was at this place."

By Friday, the 30th, he is in Maine, the field of his hardest conflicts. The people flock to hear him on all his route, and have often to leave their chapels and turn into the woods for room. At Monmouth, where

the first society was formed, they cannot get into the house; many, after the service, come to the altar to give him their hands in pledge of meeting him in heaven. "They wept," he says, "and I could not refrain from weeping." Soule and Fogg are with him there. The preachers generally gather about him as he passes along, saluting him as an old leader and conqueror, and joining in the jubilatic gatherings of the people.

Similar scenes occurred at Winthrop. At Arrington "I had," he says, "a large company of people to hear me, and I spoke with great freedom and faith; and the hearers felt the power of the word. Then, at half past two o'clock I preached to a crowded assembly. When I called upon them to remember former days, when I first visited them, about fifteen years before, which was the first time they ever heard a Methodist preacher, many of them were bathed in tears, for many, both parents and children, had been converted under the preaching of the Methodists. It was indeed a solemn time, and my soul was much quickened and blessed. In the afternoon I had a crowded house. The Spirit of the Lord God came upon me while I was speaking, and I wept, and the people wept greatly. When I dismissed them, I told them that I was about to leave them, and had but little expectation of ever preaching in that place again. Many came and gave me their hands, and, with streaming eyes, begged my prayers, and wished my welfare. Several came who had never been converted, and, crying aloud, said they would try to get to heaven if they could. I have no doubt but a lasting blessing will follow this meeting. Monday, 22d, I turned my course back toward my native country, being then about one thousand miles from home. I crossed Penobscot River to Hampden. Tuesday, 23d

of August, I rode to the Twenty-five Mile Pond, which is now a thickly-settled country most part of the way through; but when I first traveled the road, about fifteen years ago, there was not a house to be seen for twenty miles." On Sunday, 28th, he preached to great crowds at Farmington, who "wept in every part of the house." "When I first came among them," he says, "they had never seen a Methodist;" but now, besides the communicants and thronged congregations, there were "nine local preachers" around him. "Surely," he adds, "the Lord hath done great things for us. The people were greatly wrought upon. I had a sorrowful parting with many of my old friends, whom I never expect to see again."

Passing through many other towns, with similar greetings, he entered New Hampshire, having spent forty-three days, and preached forty-seven times in Maine. He gave nearly a week and seven farewell sermons to the former, and by the 14th of September was again in Lynn, Mass., where he delivered to the Church his final exhortations, and "had a sorrowful parting from his old friends." Spending a few days in Boston, he passed into the interior, through Waltham, Ware, and Wilbraham, to Hartford, Conn., preaching as he went. After spending six days and delivering seven sermons in Connecticut, he reached Garrettson's "Traveler's Rest," at Rhinebeck, on Friday, the 30th. Thus ended Lee's personal connection with Methodism in New England. His historical connection with it will probably last till the consummation of all things. He survived this visit about eight years, during which he continued to labor indefatigably in the Middle and Southern states.

Through the remainder of this period the history of

the Church in the Eastern states was a continuous repetition of such events and scenes as have been narrated: the holding of obscure Annual Conferences, where, however, great things were devised; gradual additions of circuits, and reinforcements of the ministry by such men as have already been named; the building of churches, and frequent "revivals," sometimes extending over much of the country, especially now that camp-meetings were introduced; excessive travels, privations, and labors by the itinerants; not unfrequent persecutions and mobs; but continual triumphs.

Seven Eastern evangelists fell, in death, in these years. In 1806, in Boston, Peter Jayne, a native of Massachusetts, who traveled ten years in Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, and was long remembered as a superior man. In 1808 Henry Martin, "thorough in both the theory and practice of religion," a laborer in Maine, where, in attempting to form a new circuit, he sank under his labors, and died "with songs of praise," say the Minutes, "on his quivering lips." In 1810 William Hunt, of Massachusetts, a close student, a powerful preacher in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. "I have fought a good fight," he said as he came to die, and requesting his attendants to take him from his bed and place him upon his knees, he expired kneeling, in "holy triumph." In 1812 Thomas Branch, of Connecticut, whose affecting death in the western wilderness has heretofore been noticed. In 1814 Abner Clark, of New Hampshire, who departed exclaiming, "I am going, I am going. Blessed be God for victory over sin, the world, and the devil! I have gained the victory!" In 1817 Gad Smith, of Connecticut, an effective preacher, "resigned and triumphant in death." In 1819 Jason Walker, of Massachusetts, who "passed

the valley of the shadow of death in calmness, joy, and triumph."

The first decade of the century ended with Methodism established in all the New England states. It had one extensive Conference, and a large portion of a second. The four districts with which it began the century had increased to eight;[3] its thirty-two circuits to seventy-one; its fifty-eight preachers to one hundred and fourteen, and its five thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine members to seventeen thousand five hundred and ninety-two. These statistics exhibit a remarkable progress, even if we take not into account the quite inauspicious circumstances of the denomination in the Eastern states. In ten years its districts had doubled, its circuits considerably more than doubled, its ministry lacked but two of being doubled, and its membership had more than trebled. It had gained in these ten years eleven thousand seven hundred and fifty-three members, an average increase of more than one thousand one hundred and seventy-five each year, or nearly one hundred per month. Its self-sacrificing preachers, who, in both their labors and sufferings, were indeed "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," might well have exclaimed, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." There was no considerable section of New England which was not now penetrated or compassed by their circuits, and but few localities which heard not occasionally, if not regularly, the voice of their ministrations.

At the close of the second decade its membership

[3] The Rhinebeck and Ashgrove Districts lay partly in New York, but mostly in New England.

numbered nearly twenty-five thousand, its ministry one hundred and twenty-five traveling, and some hundreds of local preachers. Such were the beginnings and early growths of that great harvest which, by the centenary of American Methodism (1866) was to yield, in New England, one hundred and three thousand four hundred and seventy-two members, and about a thousand traveling preachers, with nearly nine hundred chapels, more than a hundred thousand Sunday-school students, and thirteen educational institutions, including a university, a theological school, and boarding academies. The vitality of Methodism would be tested in New England, if anywhere; the result has been most satisfactory. The increase of members, from the beginning of the century, has been eighteenfold. In 1800 there was one Methodist to two hundred and eleven inhabitants; in 1830, one to forty-four; in 1866, one to thirty-one. The greatest proportion is in Vermont, where there is one Methodist to twenty of the inhabitants; the least is in Rhode Island, where there is one to fifty-seven. Through every decade save one (1840–1850) the denomination has gained upon the growth of the population, notwithstanding the rapid ingress of foreign papists.

Methodism has become, in our day, in New England aggregately, the second denomination in numerical strength, and the first in progress. In the state of Maine it is the first numerically; in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut the second; in Massachusetts the third, in Rhode Island the fourth. In the metropolis itself it makes more rapid progress than any other Protestant denomination,[4] and its churches are among the

[4] Report of the New England Centenary Convention, p. 166, Boston, 1866. The report of the Committee on Statistics, p. 159, made by Rev. D. Dorchester, is exceedingly valuable.

best architectural monuments of the city. Not only to the frontier populations of the nation, West, South, and North, had it a special mission, as seen in its peculiar adaptations and signal success; it had a providential work in New England, and has achieved it with equal success. At its introduction there the reaction of the rigorous Puritan theology had set in, as has been seen, and was threatening the very foundations of "orthodoxy;" Methodism, by presenting an intermediate, benign, and vital theology, provided a safe resting-place for the public mind. It has stimulated the elder Churches to new life, and has fortified itself into a powerful communion throughout all the Eastern states, sending thence, meanwhile, into all other parts of the Republic, communicants, preachers, educators, and influences which have developed and strengthened the whole denomination. It has done great things for New England, and received great blessings from it.

CHAPTER VIII.

METHODISM IN THE WEST, 1804–1820.

Geography of Western Methodism — Progress in Western Pennsylvania — Pittsburgh Conference — Robert R. Roberts's Hardships — Gruber — Usefulness of Shewel, a Local Preacher — Thomas Branch's Death in the Wilderness — A Society formed there — James B. Finley's Character — A great Western Camp-meeting — Finley's Conversion — His Labors and Sufferings — Sketch of William Swayze — Charles Elliott's Services — Alfred Brunson — Quinn in the Northwestern Territory — Whatcoat's Salutation — Jane Trimble — Review of Quinn's Labors — Primitive Camp-meetings — Growth of Methodism in Indiana — In Michigan.

Again we turn to the "great West," the scene, in our day, of the greatest triumphs of Methodism. In the outset (1804) it is still the one "Western Conference," with its four districts: Holston, under John Watson; Cumberland, under Lewis Garrett; Kentucky, under M'Kendree; Ohio, under Burke; these, besides the ultra-Alleghany districts of Baltimore Conference, the Greenbrier and Monongahela; while the Philadelphia Conference, by its Genesee District, takes in the Chenango Circuit, the scene of Robert R. Roberts's early Methodistic life. In 1806 the Mississippi District appears in the Minutes, under Learner Blackman. The successors of Tobias Gibson, seven adventurous itinerants, are invading the great Southwest. In 1809 the immense field of the Northwestern Territory ceases to be a solitary district; the Ohio District divides into two, Miami and Muskingum, respectively commanded by Sale and Quinn, and the Indiana District, under

Samuel Parker, is added; the latter has some significant names of circuits, among which are Illinois, traveled by Jesse Walker alone, and Missouri, by Abraham Amos. In 1810 Green River District, in the southwest, is added under Burke. In 1812 the title of "Green River" disappears, and we have three new districts, Nashville, Wabash, and Salt River. Indiana District gives place to that of Illinois, and Baltimore has another in the West, the Ohio, besides those of Greenbrier and Monongahela. Chenango passes from the jurisdiction of the Genesee Conference to the Ohio District. In 1813 the Northwestern Territory becomes an annual Conference, (by order of the General Conference of 1812,) under the title of Ohio. It comprehends much of Kentucky, and has six districts: Ohio, under Jacob Young; Muskingum, under David Young; Sciota, under Quinn; Miami, under Solomon Langdon; Kentucky, under Sale; Salt River, under James Ward. The name of the old "Western Conference" disappears, and that of Tennessee is first recorded, with seven grand districts: Holston, under James Axley, comprising the early mountain circuits; Nashville, under Blackman; Cumberland, under James Gwinn; Wabash, under Peter Cartwright; Illinois, under Jesse Walker; Mississippi, under Samuel Sellers; and Louisiana, under Miles Harper. The next year Green River District is added, but those of Mississippi and Louisiana disappear, with all their itinerants, hidden in the clouds of the British war. Their evangelists work on, however, holding informal Conferences among themselves. In 1815 their two districts reappear, and that of Missouri is recorded, detached from Illinois District, and commanded by Samuel H. Thompson.

In 1817, by the legislation of the General Confer-

ence of 1816, the western field had four Conferences: Ohio, with five districts, under Finley, Jacob and David Young, Moses Crume, and Samuel Parker; Missouri, with two districts, under Samuel H. Thompson and Jesse Walker; Tennessee, with six districts, under Marcus Lindsey, Thomas L. Douglass, John M'Gee, James Axley, Jesse Cunningham, and John Henninger; and Mississippi, with two districts, under Thomas Griffin and Ashley Hewitt. The ecclesiastical arrangements of the vast field remained thus, with some local variations and a rapid multiplication of districts, circuits, preachers, and members, down to the expiration of our present period, when the General Conference of 1820 created the Kentucky Conference, with five districts, under John Brown, Alexander Cummins, Jonathan Stamper, Marcus Lindsey, and Charles Holliday. Such was the geography of western Methodism in these years. We are now prepared to look over it more in detail, though it must be with but glances. Extraordinary triumphs of the gospel, and men of gigantic proportions, intellectual and moral, multiply too fast in the grand arena for our space. They are produced by their great local circumstances. God always thus provides what his people prepare themselves for. A Church or a State that projects great things cannot fail to have great men. We descend, then, the western slope of the Alleghanies again to witness achievements, wonders, seldom, if ever, paralleled in religious history—great even in their faults—characters, labors, sufferings, successes which moulded young and semi-barbarous communities that have since become mighty states, empires of Christian civilization, controlling, in our day, the fate of the new world, and destined probably, before another century, to affect the destinies of the whole world.

I have recorded the rapid outspread of Methodism in the ultra Alleghany regions of Pennsylvania, the "Redstone country." It advanced victoriously there throughout the present period, blending on the North with the southwestern appointments of the Genesee Conference; on the West with the circuits of the itinerants from Kentucky, who were now ranging through nearly all the sparse settlements of Ohio; on the South with the labors of the mountaineer itinerants of the Holston country. It was still a single presiding elder's district successively under Fleming, James Hunter, Gruber, Jacob Young, and Finley, and appertained to the distant Baltimore Conference down to 1812, when, the Ohio Conference having been organized, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the latter. In 1820 its ample field was divided between the Genesee and the Ohio Conferences: two circuits, the Chautauqua and Lake, belonging to the former, under the presiding eldership of Gideon Draper, the remainder still belonging to the latter. This arrangement continued undisturbed till 1825, when the Pittsburgh Conference was organized, comprehending all the appointments in two large districts, the Erie and the Ohio. A renowned ecclesiastical body was this "old Pittsburgh Conference" to become; thronged with notable men, constituting the chief northern stronghold of Methodism between the East and the West, and yielding at last the Erie Conference on its north, and the Western Virginia on its south.

Robert R. Roberts returned from his more eastward labors in the autumn of 1804, and traveled the Erie Circuit, placing his family again in his log-cabin in Chenango.[1] His circuit required more than four hundred miles travel every four weeks "along blind paths found

[1] Gregg's Hist. of Meth. in Erie Conf., p. 63.

by marked trees, across swollen unbridged streams, over rugged precipices and high hills, now winding around steep, rocky mountain sides, and then plunging through deep miry morasses; he sometimes camped in the woods all night, wearied and hungry, resting his head upon the root of some forest tree, while his faithful horse stood tied up without a mouthful to eat, and not unfrequently he encountered wild beasts, savage men, and venomous serpents." In his second year on the circuit it was so enlarged as to require six weeks' travel around, and a sermon every day. He subsequently labored on Pittsburgh (1807) and West Wheeling (1808) circuits, thus traversing nearly the whole field, and no man excelled him in work or hardships. He passed again to the eastward, (in 1809,) and thence (in 1816) to his continental diocese as bishop.

Gruber, appointed to the district in 1810, was in his element among its rude scenes and great revivals. It was called the Monongahela District, and reached to the Alleghanies on the east, to the Greenbrier Mountains of Virginia on the south, to the farthest white settlements of Ohio on the west, to Lake Erie on the north, comprehending ten vast circuits. He held numerous camp-meetings, convenient occasions for the dispersed population, and the whole region was pervaded with religious interest. Methodism had effectually, though slowly, broken into the Western Reserve by the labors of Shewel and Bostwick. The former a local preacher, whom we have seen working for the Church in Western Virginia, and penetrating to the Reserve at the beginning of the century, now rejoiced in the spiritual harvest around him, and, after toiling through the week with his hands, went about on Sunday, usually on foot, to distant settlements, holding meetings and organizing

societies. Like M'Cormick, of Ohio, and other lay evangelists, he was practically an apostle in the wilderness. He even moved his residence to extend his religious labors. Passing from Deerfield he settled in Hartstown, Portage County, Ohio, in 1814, and began preaching in all the neighboring regions, besides turning his own cabin into a Sabbath "appointment." He formed many classes. "Thus," says the local historian,[2] "did this faithful old pioneer find his way into the new settlements, breaking up new ground, and after raising up societies, he would hand them over to the preachers on the circuit, and then seek out new places of labor. 'Father' Shewel was a terror to the wicked, and often incurred their displeasure by his severity. One good Presbyterian lady was so exasperated at the severity of his remarks one day that she said, 'Father Shewel was no more fit to preach the gospel than a chestnut-burr was fit to be an eyeball;' but soon afterward, hearing a man who had been very wicked date his conversion from Shewel's preaching, recalled the uncharitable expression, and became a great admirer of the man."

Jacob Young, whose itinerant adventures in Kentucky and the Holston Mountains we have witnessed, traveled this district for three years like a herald, directing, and inspiriting with his own energy, a powerful corps of preachers, who made their way to the obscurest settlements. They reached at last (about 1812) the place where Thomas Branch had met his affecting death in the wilderness on his way from New England to the far West, as heretofore recorded. It was called North East, and is in Erie County, Penn. There was not a Methodist within twenty miles of the dying hero, but Young's

[2] Gregg, p. 119.

pioneers soon formed a society on the spot, some of its members probably being the fruits of Branch's last exhortations and prayers. A local preacher from Canada built his cabin there, and did good service for the young society. A chapel was erected, "and," says the historian,[3] "the Church has maintained a prosperous existence ever since, and many happy spirits have gone up from that town to join the triumphant host in heaven." The same authority, referring to Branch, adds: "The day of his burial found a few of his friends present who had been blessed through his instrumentality, and who desired in turn to give him a respectable Christian funeral and burial. But the little log Calvinistic church could not be procured for that purpose, nor were they permitted to inter his body in the newly inclosed cemetery, nor could they procure a respectable team or carriage with which to carry the corpse to the grave. At the hour appointed a prayer was offered, and the coffin placed on a wood-sled and drawn by a yoke of oxen about one mile and a quarter west from the present village of North East, and on the north side of the Erie and Buffalo road this sainted man was buried in a beautiful grove. To the honor of the people of that town be it said, they have long since so enlarged the cemetery as to bring within its inclosure the grave of the lamented Branch. The writer was permitted several years since to visit the place, and shed a few tears over the turf that covers his sacred dust."

An important western character appeared in this field in 1816. Young failed to reach the district after the General Conference of that year; James B. Finley came to supply his place, and continued to superintend it till 1819 with extraordinary zeal and success. Few

[3] Gregg, p. 110.

men have attained more distinction as evangelical pioneers of the West; he was, in all respects, a genuine child of the wilderness, one of its best "typical" men; of stalwart frame, "features rather coarse,"[4] but large benevolent eyes, "sandy hair, standing erect," a good, expressive mouth, a "voice like thunder," and a courage that made riotous opposers (whom he often encountered) quail before him. He did not hesitate to seize disturbers of his meetings, shake them in his athletic grasp, and pitch them out of the windows or doors. Withal his heart was most genial, his discourses full of pathos, and his friendships the most tender and lasting. All over the northwest he worked mightily, through a long life, to found and extend his Church, traveling circuits and districts, laboring as missionary to the Indians, and chaplain to prisoners, and in his old age making valuable historical contributions to its literature.[5]

Though born in North Carolina, (in 1781,) his childhood was spent in Kentucky, where he grew up with all the hardy habits of the pioneer settlers. In early manhood he and all his father's family were borne along by the current of emigration into the Northwestern Territory, where he lived to see his state (Ohio) become a dominant part of the American Union. He had been a rough, reckless, and entirely irreligious youth, associating with Indians, a "mighty hunter" among the "backwoodsmen," fond of nearly every excess, and of the most hazardous adventures with savage men and beasts. The camp-meetings of

[4] Gregg, p. 143.

[5] In my own collections are, from his pen, "Autobiography," Cincinnati, 1854; "Sketches of Western Methodism," Cincinnati, 1857; "Life among the Indians," Cincinnati, 1857; "Memorials of Prison Life," Cincinnati, 1850.

the Presbyterians and Methodists in Kentucky had spread, about the beginning of the century, a vivid religious interest all over the West. Finley's sensitive though rough nature could not escape it. He went with some of his associates to Cane Ridge, Ky., his former home, to witness one of these great occasions His own story gives us a striking view of them in their primitive, their rude western grandeur and excesses. "A scene presented itself," he says, "to my mind not only novel and unaccountable, but awful beyond description. A vast crowd, supposed by some to have amounted to twenty-five thousand, was collected together. The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by storm. I counted seven ministers all preaching at the same time; some on stumps, others on wagons, and one, William Burke, standing on a tree which, in falling, had lodged against another. Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous accents. While witnessing these scenes a peculiarly strange sensation, such as I had never felt before, came over me. My heart beat tremendously, my knees trembled, my lip quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground. A strange supernatural power seemed to pervade the mass of mind there collected. I became so weak that I found it necessary to sit down. Soon after I left and went into the woods, and there strove to rally and man up my courage. After some time I returned to the scene of excitement, the waves of which had, if possible, risen still higher. The same awfulness of feeling came over me. I stepped up on a log, where I could have a better view of the surging sea of humanity. The scene that then presented itself to my eye was indescribable. At

one time I saw at least five hundred swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them. My hair rose up on my head, my whole frame trembled, the blood ran cold in my veins, and I fled to the woods a second time, and wished that I had stayed at home." He went to a neighboring tavern, where, amid a throng of drinking and fighting backwoodsmen, he swallowed a dram of brandy, but afterward felt worse than before; "as near hell," he says, "as I could wish to be, in either this world or that to come." Drawn irresistibly back to the meeting, he gazed again, appalled, upon its scenes. That night he slept in a barn, a most wretched man. The next day he hastily left for his home with one of his companions. They were both too absorbed in their reflections to converse as they journeyed; but, says Finley, "When we arrived at the Blue Lick Knobs I broke the silence which reigned between us, and said, 'Captain, if you and I don't stop our wickedness the devil will get us both.'" Tears gushed freely from the eyes of both. The next night was spent without slumber at a place called May's Lick. "As soon as day broke," adds Finley, "I went to the woods to pray, and no sooner had my knees touched the ground than I cried aloud for mercy and salvation, and fell prostrate. My cries were so loud that they attracted the attention of the neighbors, many of whom gathered around me. Among the number was a German from Switzerland, who had experienced religion. He, understanding fully my condition, had me carried to his house and laid on a bed. The old Dutch saint directed me to look right away to the Saviour. He then kneeled by my bedside and prayed for me most fervently in Dutch and broken English. He rose and sang in the same manner, and

continued singing and praying alternately till nine o'clock, when suddenly my load was gone, my guilt removed, and presently the direct witness from heaven shone fully upon my heart. Then there flowed such copious streams of love into the hitherto waste and desolate places of my soul, that I thought I should die with excess of joy. So strangely did I appear to all but the Dutch brother that they thought me deranged. After a time I returned to my companion, and we started on our journey. O what a day it was to my soul!"

For seven years no Methodist itinerant reached his remote home in the Northwestern Territory, and he lost these powerful influences; but in 1808 he went, with his wife, some miles to a Methodist class-meeting, and soon after both joined the Church. In 1809 John Sale called him out to travel the Sciota Circuit. He was received, the same year, into the Conference, and continued to travel circuits till he was sent, in 1816, to supply the place of Young in Western Pennsylvania. From one end of his great field to the other his trumpet was now continually sounding, awakening the most hidden settlements. His privations and labors were excessive, but could not daunt him. "I suffered much," he writes, "with cold, which I had contracted by exposure to the chilling blasts of the northern lakes. Our meetings were all attended with the presence and power of God, and the preachers were all in the spirit of revivals. At North East we had a most glorious time both among saints and sinners. The snow was about two feet deep, and continued for a long time, affording great facilities for sleighing, which were improved. Vast numbers came to church, and many were converted. At this place I visited the grave of Thomas Branch. . . . My feelings

were of a peculiarly solemn character as I stood by that lone grave of the stranger minister in a strange land." His example inspired his preachers to labor and suffer. "Great," he says, "were the toils and hardships they were called to endure. The winter was extremely severe, the cold being almost beyond endurance, yet the Lord crowned the labor and sufferings of his ministers with success. The country was but sparsely settled, the rides were long, and roads rough, the fare hard, and provisions scarce; but in the midst of all the Lord was with them. To preach once every day and lead class, (after having traveled from ten to twenty miles,) and two or three times on the Sabbath, leading as many classes, with the privilege of being at home three days out of thirty, would now be regarded as severe work."

William Swayze succeeded Finley on the district in 1819. He also was one of "the giants of those days." He was born in New Jersey in 1784. In his youth he was led, by a pious African, to hear a Methodist preacher near Baltimore, was awakened and converted, and soon after received into the Church by Philip Bruce. It was not long before he was preaching "with surprising ability." A horse and outfit were presented to him, and he started on a ministerial tour through Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont. In 1807 he was received by the New York Conference, and began a course of eight years'[6] most successful travels and labors, chiefly on New England circuits. "He became," says the western historian, "emphatically a 'son of thunder,' attracting great crowds of people to his ministry, and speaking with a power and pathos that few have ever equaled, moving

[6] Not ten, as stated in the Minutes of 1842.

and exciting many, some to tears, others to cry for mercy, while others would shout for joy."[7]

In 1815 he was transferred to the Ohio Conference, where his ministrations were attended with his former success, and where living witnesses of his usefulness still survive, especially on Columbus Circuit and in Chillicothe. In the latter place his word was eminently in the demonstration of the Spirit and power. In 1820 he took charge of the Ohio District, and "his labors, for almost four years, were crowned with unexampled success."[8] By the division of the Conference in 1824, he was assigned to the Pittsburgh Conference, and appointed to the Erie District, where he was distinguished by "his usual prosperity." In 1828 he superintended the Canton District. In 1830 he was retransferred to the Ohio Conference. After having borne the burden of twenty-seven years' labor and suffering in some of the most difficult portions of the ministerial field, the infirmities of age and illness at last disabled him. When no longer able to perform effective service, his brethren of the Pittsburgh Conference invited him, by formal request, to return to their body, share their provisions for wornout preachers, and die among them. In honoring him with this act of generous consideration the Conference still more eminently honored itself. He was placed upon its superannuated list, where he remained till he departed to his final rest, at Edinburgh, Ohio, in 1841, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and in great peace and resignation. His fellow-laborers pronounce him "a martyr to his work." "He was," says our western authority, who knew him well, "a very remarkable man, differing greatly from Finley, Young, and Gruber, but in moving, melting eloquence

[7] Gregg, p. 177. [8] Minutes, 1842.

not inferior to either of them. He was tall, straight, and slim in person, with great power of endurance. His complexion was dark, his eyes black, deeply set, and very expressive. His voice possessed great compass, and was perfectly at his control. At times it would be soft and mellow, then it would become like peals of thunder, or the roar of a lion. Himself full of feeling and interest, and possessing a wonderful command of the feelings of others, he would at times sway the multitude of astonished listeners like trees by a hurricane, carrying his congregation up with him, until they would rise from their seats and rush toward the speaker, some weeping, others shouting, and others falling like dead men. He could never contentedly close a quarterly meeting or a camp-meeting without having a big break in the ranks of the wicked. We will venture the opinion that more souls, along the southern shore of Lake Erie, have gone up to shine like stars in the heavenly sky through the instrumentality of William Swayze than by that of any other man dead or living." [9]

He had many able young preachers under his authority on this district; among them was Charles Elliott, whose important services belong to dates beyond our present chronological limits, a man of extraordinary learning, of tireless labor through a protracted life, and of most genial character. He was born in Ireland, in 1792, where he was early brought into the Church by Wesley's itinerants. Believing himself divinely called to preach, he studied assiduously, and prepared himself for college, but was refused admission to Dublin University because he could not subscribe its theological tests. He came to the United States a local preacher

[9] Gregg, p. 178.

in 1814, and plunged immediately into the woods of Ohio. In 1819 the Ohio Conference received him on probation, and sent him, with Thomas A. Morris, (afterward bishop,) to Zanesville Circuit, under the presiding eldership of Jacob Young. The next year he appears in our present field on the Erie Circuit.[10] For years he was a principal founder of the Church as circuit preacher and presiding elder in these regions, and one year he spent as missionary among the Upper Sandusky Indians. But his superior education fitted him for more exigent services. From 1827 to 1831 he was Professor of Languages in Madison College, which pertained to the Pittsburgh Conference. After presiding two years more on Uniontown District, he was appointed editor of the Pittsburgh Conference Journal; in 1836 editor of the Western Christian Advocate, at Cincinnati; in 1848 presiding elder of Cincinnati District; in 1852 again editor of the Western Christian Advocate; in 1856 president of Iowa Wesleyan University; in 1860 editor of the Central Christian Advocate, at St. Louis, where he courageously maintained the loyal party during the war of the rebellion, while surrounded with and menaced by treason. He subsequently served the Iowa Wesleyan University till the infirmities of age required him to retire in 1866. Besides his fragmentary writings, (almost innumerable editorials, and other contributions to the periodical literature of the Church,) he has written "Delineations of Roman Catholicism," a standard work, republished in England; "Sinfulness of American Slavery," an exhaustive investigation of the subject; and the "History of the Great Secession" of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from the parent body in 1844, a large volume, in which the history of that mo-

[10] Gregg, p. 182.

mentous proceeding and of the antecedent ecclesiastical controversy on slavery is thoroughly given.

Alfred Brunson was one of his successful colaborers in the Erie country. He was born in Connecticut in 1793, and converted in 1809 at Carlisle, Penn., whither he had gone "a runaway apprentice" from New England, a wayward youth, like so many others whom the powerful ministrations of Methodism arrested and converted into useful men. He was brought into the Church under the labors of Jacob Gruber, returned to Connecticut, purchased the time of his apprenticeship, joined Jesse Lee's first eastern class, and was licensed to exhort in 1810. In 1812 he moved to Ohio, spent a year in the army under General Harrison, was licensed to preach in 1815 by Jacob Young, and called out to travel, by Finley, in 1818, when he formed the Huron Circuit, Ohio. In 1819 he was sent to the Erie Circuit by Swayze, and was signally successful, reporting an increase of three hundred members. In 1820 he was received into the Ohio Conference, and appointed to Mahoning Circuit. During these early years he laboriously extended the denomination, forming many new societies. He traveled subsequently for some time at large, and after serving the Church thirteen years "with distinguished ability on circuits and stations" in remoter parts of the West, reappeared on the scene of his first travels as presiding elder. In 1835 he was transferred to the Illinois Conference, and, placing his family at Prairie du Chien, "spent several years as a missionary among the Indians on the Upper Mississippi; then was presiding elder a while, then state legislator, then returned to the regular work of the ministry."[1] He was chap-

[1] Gregg, p. 349.

lain in the army in 1862, and retired to the superannuated ranks in 1864, "a veteran of long and useful services."

By 1820 Methodism was thoroughly established in all this country, with districts and circuits belonging, some to the Genesee, some to the Baltimore, others to the Virginia, and still others to the Ohio Conferences; more than half a hundred itinerants were sounding the gospel among the mountains and valleys from Lake Erie to far into Western Virginia, and thousands of zealous members were rallying into classes and incipient Churches. They were laying the foundations of the Erie, Pittsburgh, and Western Virginia Conferences.

Passing further westward, into the "great Northwestern Territory," we again meet Quinn, whom we have so often followed over the ground just surveyed, but who had now been borne away by the surges of emigration. In 1804 we find him traveling the Hockhocking Circuit, Ohio, an immense field, comprising not only all the settlements of that river, but those of the Muskingum, and of the Sciota from the high bank below Chillicothe as far up as the site of Columbus, and those also of many other streams. He was still a pioneer and founder, forming societies in almost all the sparse communities. His family was placed in a cabin, exposed to Indians, and, in his occasional visits home, he had to carry flour to them more than forty miles. He went through the country scattering the "good seed" of the gospel broadcast. Occasionally one of the bishops reached and cheered him. Whatcoat found his way thither. "I shall never forget," says the itinerant, "the sweet and heavenly smile with which he met me. While holding my hand he said, 'I first found thy footsteps on the Lake Shore in 1801; next I found thee in

Winchester, Va., in 1802; then met thee at the altar, in Light-street, Baltimore, in 1803; and now I find thee here! Well, we must endure hardships as good soldiers of the cross. The toils and privations of itinerancy are great; but Christ has said, Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.'"

Thence Quinn passed to Scioto Circuit, where he had about thirty appointments, the nearest being fifty miles from his family. Emigrants from Kentucky were now pouring into this region, and among them were many zealous Methodists. At one of his meetings "a very dignified and elderly looking" woman, a stranger, remained to attend the class, in which she said, "with a full soul, and with eyes swimming in tears, 'I am, through the infinite mercy of God, a child of his, and, by blessed experience, know I enjoy the pardoning love of the Saviour. I am a widow, recently from Kentucky. I have a large family of children. I have traveled nine or ten miles to enjoy this means of grace, and to invite you to preach in my cabin for the benefit of my children and my unconverted neighbors.' Her words were with power, and it was manifest that the love of Christ constrained her, that she was filled with the Holy Ghost. While she spoke, the same flame was kindled in the hearts of others, and some shouted aloud for joy. After the class Quinn learned that the stranger was Jane Trimble, mother to Governor Trimble, and grandmother to Joseph M. Trimble. On his next round he preached at her double cabin, on Clear Creek, three miles north of Hillsboro. At this meeting, it is probable, no professor of religion was present except the pious widow and the preacher. After the sermon, as there was no class to meet, he stated that it was his last round on the circuit, and, as he had soon to

leave for Conference, he could not preach to them any more, but that his successors would. He then sung one of the songs of Zion. At that period his voice was most melodious and sweet. The tones of the music, accompanied with a holy unction, melted every heart. While singing, he passed through the room, and shook hands with every one present. All were more or less affected. Young Mrs. Trimble, first wife of Allen Trimble, and mother of Joseph M., though once a professor of religion, became conscious of her backsliding and lukewarmness, and the absolute necessity of the reclaiming grace of God. Her anguish of spirit was so great she could conceal it no longer. She first went out of the room; but, finding there no means of relief to her distressed soul, she soon returned, and kneeled down at a seat. Many hearts perhaps sympathized with her, but there were but two to pray for her. They were, however, efficient suppliants, and, having power with God, they soon prevailed. In a short time the earnest seeker was powerfully reclaimed; and such was the clear testimony of the Spirit, assuring her that her soul was restored to the favor of God, that she praised the Lord with but little intermission till midnight. In a few years she passed away in holy triumph, and now awaits the arrival of her friends in heaven." [12]

The venerable Jane Trimble became a "mother in Israel" to the Methodists of the Northwestern Territory. Her family, that of her son Governor Trimble, and of her grandson, Joseph M. Trimble, (one of the missionary secretaries of the Church,) have been identified with nearly the entire history of the denomination in Ohio. She was an extraordinary woman. Born in Virginia in 1755, on the very borders of civilization, she was

[12] Wright's Life of Quinn, p. 95.

familiar, from childhood, with the warwhoop of the savage.[13] Several of her family perished in the Revolutionary and Indian wars. In 1784 she emigrated to Kentucky, whither her husband had gone to lay out a farm and build a log-cabin. "She traveled," says her biographer, "on horseback, carrying her eldest child behind her, and her little boy, Allen, eleven months old, in her lap. On reaching Clinch River the stream was found swollen by recent rains, and the swift current dashed over huge rocks. She was leading the company of females, and, trusting in God, and committing all her interests to him, she urged her steed into the rapid stream, and reached the opposite shore in safety, amid the prayers and shouts of those who watched her progress. The remainder of the company crossed by a ford further up the river." General Knox, who convoyed the train, and witnessed the feat, and her noble conduct throughout the journey, applauded her as equaling in courage and presence of mind the women of Sparta.

For fifteen years she lived, surrounded by Indian perils, about ten miles from a "station," near the site of Lexington, educating her children and servants with the ability and dignity of a true Christian matron. She possessed a remarkably vigorous mind, was familiar, there in the backwoods, with the great English poets, and had the four gospels entirely in her memory, acquired when she was but fifteen years old. Some of the writings of Fletcher fell into her hands, and she became a Methodist in 1790. Her husband determined to push on farther with the movement of emigration, and purchased lands in Ohio, but died before the family started for their new home. The noble widow led her

[13] Disosway's "Excellent Women," p. 183. New York, 1861.

eight children thither, and there, in Highland County, welcomed Quinn, and formed one of the first Sunday-schools in the state. Every interest of the Church, especially its missions to the aborigines, had her hearty co-operation through the remainder of her long life She saw all the Northwestern Territory overspread by her denomination, her great state organized, the infant son, whom she had carried on her steed to the West, its chief magistrate, and died under his roof in 1839, aged more than eighty-four years, having been a devoted Methodist nearly fifty years. She was not only one of the best, but one of the ablest women who have adorned her Church or country, a befitting associate of Mary Tiffin, Mrs. General Russell, and similar "elect ladies" of the Church in the wilderness.

Throughout the remainder of the present period Quinn continued to labor in Ohio with great success: on Muskingum District in 1808, Scioto District in 1812, Fairfield Circuit in 1816, Pickaway Circuit 1817, at Cincinnati in 1818, and at Chillicothe in 1820. Later in life, in reviewing his work, he wrote: "In each of these fields it may be safely asserted that, during the last forty years, thousands of redeemed sinners have been called, justified, sanctified, and taken home to heaven, while thousands more, to the third or fourth generation, are still on the way. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for what my eyes have seen! If the men that labored and suffered here were unlearned in the classics, and, therefore, in the judgment of some, incompetent ministers, yet hath the great Head of the Church, through their instrumentality, given to his people and the world many competent ministers, who have been, and still are, both burning and shining lights. If Chenango Circuit, formed in 1800 by Peter B. Davis, gave the

Methodist Episcopal Church her senior bishop, (Roberts,) Guyandotte, formed in 1803 by William Steel, and traveled in 1804 by Asa Shinn, furnished her with her junior bishop, (Morris;) and if Kanawha, Muskingum, Hockhocking, etc. have not sent out bishops, they have sent out scores of deacons and elders, and with them a goodly number of scholars and professional men; but the preacher-making prerogative still belongs to Christ. O, Methodists, never forget this! I may have attended and superintended one hundred and thirty or forty camp-meetings, and witnessed most powerful displays of God's amazing grace, in the conviction and happy conversion of some thousands of souls. At first we used to erect two stands, with seats at each, one in the encampment, and the other some twenty or thirty rods distant, and no altar at either. At these we had preaching alternately through the day, but only the one in the encampment was illuminated and occupied at night. Each public service was followed by a prayer-meeting, which was not to be broken off to make way for preaching; but the trumpet was sounded at the other stand, whither all who wished to hear preaching were wont to repair. Here also a prayer-meeting ensued, and so alternately through the day. There were no altars, no 'mourners' benches,' or 'anxious seats' in those days, nor were any invitations given to seekers of salvation to present themselves for the prayers of the Church; but soon after the commencement of the prayer-meeting, praying and singing groups and circles were seen and heard throughout the encampment, even to the outskirts of the congregation; and there was no great difficulty in keeping pretty good order, for an awful sense of the majesty and glory of God often appeared to pervade the whole assembly. As an evidence

of the great good resulting from camp-meetings, it is a fact that a large proportion of the members, and many eminently useful ministers, in the western country, have been brought to a knowledge of salvation at these meetings." Burke, Shinn, Oglesby, Sale, Lakin, Parker, William Young, Lotspeich, Lasley, Manley, Cummins, and many other energetic men, soon to be noticed, were colaborers of Quinn in these regions, throughout these years.

From Ohio the systematic work of the Church extended westward over Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri.

Indiana territory was constituted in 1800; in 1805 it was divided by the organization of Michigan territory, and in 1809 that of Illinois was detached from it.

In 1802 the first Indiana Methodist society was formed, at Gassoway, in "Clark's Grant," Nathan Robertson being the first Methodist of the territory. Two years later there was an Illinois mission. Whitewater Circuit was formed in 1807, with Thomas Hellams for its preacher, and sixty-seven members; Silver Creek in 1808, and Vincennes in 1810. In 1815 there were, in the entire territory, Whitewater, Silver Creek, Illinois, Little Wabash, Vincennes, and Lawrenceburgh Circuits, having one thousand seven hundred members and seven preachers. The latter were John Strange, W. M. Hunt, Shadrack Ruark, John Scripps, John Shrader, James Noland, and W. C. Harbesson.

By the end of our present period there were in the same territory twenty-six preachers and eight thousand members. By the end of the first quarter of the century they had so increased that there were in Michigan four, in Illinois eighteen, and in Indiana twenty-eight itinerants, making forty preachers and fourteen thousand members. Seven years later the increase was, in Michi-

gan, eight preachers and one thousand six hundred members; in Illinois, forty-four preachers, ten thousand members; and in Indiana, sixty preachers and twenty thousand members. In 1832 was formed the Indiana Conference. For twelve years the entire state was in one Conference, which was first divided in 1844, when it reported sixty-six thousand members, two hundred traveling preachers, and four hundred and eighty-eight local preachers. In our day (1866) there are in the state four Conferences, four hundred traveling preachers, seven hundred local preachers, and ninety thousand members. "This state, though it bears a name signifying 'domain of the Indian,' which, when given, was literally true, has for its more than one million three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, two thousand nine hundred and thirty-three places of worship, one thousand two hundred and fifty-six of which are furnished by the Methodists, with accommodations for more than one million, and valued at nearly four million five hundred thousand dollars. The state has six thousand five hundred free schools, one thousand one hundred and twenty-three Sabbath-schools, more than one hundred higher schools or academies and colleges, of which the Methodists furnish one third." [14]

The extension of Methodism northwestward, into the Michigan territory, was slow. The fruits of the labors of Bangs, Case, and Mitchell, lingered in Detroit till Joseph Hickox was appointed to the circuit in 1815; the recent war had demoralized the whole country, and Hickox could discover only seven Methodists in Detroit. A society, which had been organized at Monroe in 1811, he found entirely broken up, and he was the only Protestant preacher in the territory for at least one

[14] Rev. Dr. Aaron Wood's Centenary Sermon. Chicago, 1866.

year. There was not yet a single Protestant chapel in it. But, after the war, emigration, and, with it, Methodism, began to pour into the country. "As the population extended, our ministers," says a local authority, "followed them, wading through the swamps and marshes, and striking the Indian trails, so that the people have never been left for any considerable time without the gospel. The first preachers were sent from the New York Conference, the next from the Genesee, the third from the Ohio. In 1836 the Michigan Conference was created—it included a part of Ohio; but in 1840 the Ohio portion was separated, leaving Michigan alone. At this time there were only seventy-eight ministers and preachers, and eleven thousand five hundred and twenty-three members. Though this seems small, we must consider that the population was sparse. Now we have about three hundred ministers, and thirty-two thousand members. The first Protestant church erected in Michigan was built near Detroit in 1818. It was made of logs, and was considered a fine affair; but now we find substantial churches dotting all the country. These are but indications of the thrift and spiritual prosperity of our people. This great advance in numerical and financial strength has not been secured without toil and sacrifice on the part of those who have led on the sacramental host. Nathan Bangs traveled from the city of New York to Detroit on horseback; William Case crossed the Detroit River sometimes on floating ice, jumping from cake to cake; Joseph Hickox braved dangers from hostile Indians and rude British soldiers; others have slept in the woods, and carried an ax to blaze their way through the forest. But all have been borne up by the divine presence." [15]

[15] Rev. E. H. Pilcher, in Northwestern Christian Adv., Sept. 5 1866.

CHAPTER IX.

METHODISM IN THE WEST, CONTINUED: 1804–1820.

Progress in Illinois — Jesse Walker — His Pioneer Adventures — M'Kendree and Walker in the Wilderness — Walker's Camp-meeting — His Success — He enters Missouri — Oglesby and Travis there — Missouri Conference Organized — Walker's Sufferings — He Introduces Methodism into St. Louis — His Determined Struggles there — He goes to the Indian Tribes — Labors at Chicago — His Death and Character — Samuel Parker, "the Cicero of the West" — James Axley's extraordinary Character and Labors — He Attacks Slavery and Whisky — Peter Cartwright's Early Life — Remarkable Scene at a Quarterly Meeting — His extensive Services — David Young — John Collins — Judge M'Lean's Conversion and Character.

We have seen the extension of the itinerant ministry to the Illinois territory, by Benjamin Young, in 1804, and his extreme sufferings there. He had been preceded, however, by less known laborers. The "real pioneer of the Church," says our best living Illinois authority, "was Capt. Joseph Ogle, who went thither in 1785. The first Methodist preacher was Joseph Lillard, who, in 1793, formed a class in St. Clair County, and appointed Captain Ogle leader. The next Methodist preacher was John Clarke, who originally traveled in South Carolina from 1791 to 1796, when he withdrew on account of slavery. He was the first man that preached the gospel west of the Mississippi, in 1798. Hosea Riggs was the first Methodist preacher that settled in Illinois, and he revived and reorganized the class at Captain Ogle's, formed by Lillard, which had dropped its regular meetings. From 1798 there seems to have been no regular preacher in Illinois till 1804; then Benjamin Young was

sent as a missionary. In the fall of 1805 he returned sixty-seven members, and Joseph Oglesby was appointed to succeed him on the Illinois Circuit."[1]

A notable character appeared on the scene in 1806, a man whose name is identified for years with the westward progress of Methodism. Jesse Walker was a native of North Carolina,[2] but early emigrated to Tennessee. He became a member of the Western Conference in 1802, and traveled circuits in Tennessee and Kentucky for about four years, before his indomitable spirit led him forth to pioneer the Church through Illinois and Missouri. His ministry in these first years was preparatory for the great work of his ensuing life; few men in Kentucky or Tennessee equaled him in labor or hardships. One of his contemporaries says: "He was a character perfectly unique; he had no duplicate. He was to the Church what Daniel Boone was to the early settler, always first, always ahead of everybody else, preceding all others long enough to be the pilot of the new-comer. He is found first in Davidson County, Tenn. He lived within about three miles of the then village of Nashville, and was at that time a man of family, poor, and, to a considerable extent, without education. He was admitted on trial in 1802, and appointed to the Red River Circuit. But the Minutes, in his case, are no guide, from the fact that he was sent by the bishops and presiding elders in every direction where new work was to be cut out. His natural vigor was almost superhuman. He did not seem to require food and rest as other men; no day's journey was long enough to tire him; no fare too poor for him to live

[1] Peter Cartwright's "Autobiography," p. 167.

[2] Bishop Morris, in Sprague, p. 380. There is no record of his early life; Minutes 1836–7.

on; to him, in traveling, roads and paths were useless things—he 'blazed' out his own course; no way was too bad for him—if his horse could not carry him he led him, and when his horse could not follow, he would leave him, and take it on foot; and if night and a cabin did not come together, he would pass the night alone in the wilderness, which with him was no uncommon occurrence. Looking up the frontier settler was his chief delight; and he found his way through hill and brake as by instinct—he was never lost; and, as Bishop M'Kendree once said of him, in addressing an annual Conference, he never complained. As the Church moved West and North it seemed to bear Walker before it. Every time you could hear from him he was still farther on; and when the settlements of the white man seemed to take shape and form, he was next heard of among the Indian tribes of the Northwest."[3]

His appointment to Illinois in 1806 was a mission to the whole territory. The region between Kentucky and the interior of this new field was yet a wilderness, and difficult to travel. M'Kendree, the presiding elder, set out, therefore, with his pioneer itinerant, to assist him on the way. They journeyed on horseback, sleeping in the woods on their saddle blankets, and cooking their meals under trees. "It was a time," says an authority who knew them both, "of much rain, the channels were full to overflowing, and no less than seven times their horses swam the rapid streams with their riders and baggage; but the travelers, by carrying their saddle-bags on their shoulders, kept their Bibles and part of their clothes above the water. This was truly a perilous business. At night they had opportunity not only

[3] Biographical Sketches, p. 53.

of drying their wet clothes and taking res , but of prayer and Christian converse. In due time they reached their destination safely. M'Kendree remained a few weeks, visited the principal neighborhoods, aided in forming a plan of appointments for the mission, and the new settlers received them with much favor."[4]

Walker, alone in the territory, moved over it courageously, till the winter compelled him to suspend his circuit plan, and commence operating from house to house, or rather from cabin to cabin, "passing none without calling and delivering the gospel message. He was guided by the indications of Providence, and took shelter for the night wherever he could obtain it, so as to resume his labor early the next day, and he continued this course of toil till about the close of the winter. The result was a general revival with the opening spring, when the people were able to reassemble, and he to resume his regular plan. Shortly after this a young preacher was sent to his relief, and, being thus reinforced, he determined to include in the plan of the summer's campaign a camp meeting, which was the more proper, because the people had no convenient place for worship but the forest. The site selected was near a beautiful spring of pure water. All friends of the enterprise were invited to meet upon the spot, on a certain day, with axes, saws, augers, and hammers for the work of preparation. The ground was cleared, and dedicated by prayer as a place of public worship. Walker took the lead of the preparatory work, and tents, seats, and pulpit were all arranged before the congregation assembled. It was the first experiment of the kind in that country ; but it worked well. After the public services commenced there was no dispute among preachers or people

[4] Bishop Morris, in Sprague, p. 381.

as to the choice of pulpit orators. The senior preached, and the junior exhorted; then the junior preached, and the senior exhorted; and so on through the meeting of several days and nights, the intervals between sermons being occupied with prayer and praise. The meeting did not close till, as Walker expressed it, 'the last stick of timber was used up,' meaning, till the last sinner left on the ground was converted. The impulse which the work received from that camp-meeting was such that it extended through most of the settlements embraced in the mission, which was constantly enlarging its borders as the people moved into the territory. Walker visited one neighborhood near the Illinois River, containing some sixty or seventy souls. They all came to hear him; and, having preached three successive days, he read the General Rules, and proposed that as many of them as desired to unite to serve God, according to the Bible, should come forward and make it known. The most prominent man among them rose to his feet, and said, 'Sir, I trust we will all unite here with you to serve God;' then walked forward, and all the rest followed. As the result of his first year's experiment in Illinois, two hundred and eighteen Church members were reported in the printed Minutes."[5]

His next field was Missouri, and he continued to travel thenceforward, alternately in each territory, down to 1812, when, as presiding elder, he took command of all the Methodist interests of both; both appertaining to the Tennessee Conference. He had charge of districts in one or the other till 1819, when he was appointed Conference missionary, that he might range about "breaking up new ground," a work for which he was singularly fitted, and in which he persisted for years.

[5] Bishop Morris.

Before Walker's arrival, however, Methodism had penetrated Missouri. Joseph Oglesby, who was appointed to Illinois in 1804, writes that in June of 1805 he "reconnoitered the Missouri country to the extremity of the settlements, and had the pleasure of seeing Daniel Boone, the mighty hunter. He preached frequently, which was novel to the people, as he was the first Methodist that had ever preached in that territory."[6]

The first intimation that the Minutes give of an appointment to Missouri is in 1806, when Walker entered Illinois. John Travis, then a youth, recently admitted to the Western Conference, was dispatched immediately to the Missouri wilds, when the whole country had but about sixteen thousand inhabitants. His circuit pertained to the Cumberland District, which comprised West Tennessee, parts of Kentucky, Indiana, and Arkansas, and all Illinois and Missouri. The young pioneer returned a hundred white and six African members at the next Conference, at which two Missouri circuits were recorded, "Maramack and Missouri," and Walker and Edmund Wilcox sent to them. Slow but steady progress was made till the field was mature enough to be constituted a Conference in 1816, without a boundary on the West, "but including the last Methodist cabin, toward the setting sun," and taking in all Missouri and Illinois and the western part of Indiana.[7] Its first session was held in Shiloh Meeting-house, St. Clair County, Ill., about ten miles from St. Louis, September 23. M'Kendree presided, and John C. Harbison acted as secretary. Its original members were but seven, but, before the adjournment, candidates were admitted, en-

[6] Life, etc., of Allen Wiley, p. 53. Cincinnati, 1853.

[7] Papers on "the Origin of Methodism in Missouri," by Rev. E. H. Waring, in "Central Christian Advocate."

larging the little corps to twenty-two. Seven of its appointments were in Missouri, four in Indiana, four in Illinois, and one in Arkansas, at Flat Springs, sixty four miles southwest of Little Rock. The Conference included three thousand and forty-one members, only eight hundred and forty one of whom were in Missouri. Arkansas had one hundred and eight, Illinois nine hundred and sixty-eight, Indiana, one thousand one hundred and twenty-four.

Walker was a great sufferer as well as a great laborer in these fields. "I think it was in the fall of 1819," says Peter Cartwright, "that our beloved old Brother Walker, who had traveled all his life, or nearly so, came over to our Tennessee Conference, which sat in Nashville, to see us; but O how weather beaten and war-worn was he! almost, if not altogether, without decent apparel to appear among us. We soon made a collection, and had him a decent suit of clothes to put on; and never shall I forget the blushing modesty and thankfulness with which he accepted that suit, and never did I and others have a stronger verification of our Lord's words, 'That it is more blessed to give than to receive.'"[8]

Though Jesse Walker was not the first Methodist itinerant in Missouri, he ranks as the principal founder of the denomination there. No obstruction could withstand his assaults. As pioneer, circuit preacher, presiding elder, he drove all opposition before him, and inspirited his colaborers with his own energy, so that Methodism effectively superseded the original Roman Catholic predominance in that country. In 1820 he resolved to plant its standard in St. Louis, the Romish metropolis, where the itinerants had "never found rest for the soles

[8] Cartwright's Autobiography, p. 489.

of their feet." "He commenced laying the train," says his friend Morris, "at Conference, appointed a time to open the campaign and begin the siege, and engaged two young preachers of undoubted courage, such as he believed would stand by him 'to the bitter end,' to meet him at a given time and place, and to aid him in the difficult enterprise. Punctual to their engagement, they all met, and proceeded to the city together. When they reached it the territorial legislature was in session there, and every public place appeared to be full. The missionaries preferred private lodgings, but could obtain none. Some people laughed at them, and others cursed them to their face. Thus embarrassed at every point, they rode into the public square, and held a consultation on their horses. The prospect was gloomy enough, and every avenue seemed closed against them. The young preachers expressed strong doubts as to their being in the path of duty. Their leader tried to encourage them, but in vain. They thought that if the Lord had any work for them there to do, there would surely be some way to get to it. They thought it best immediately to return to the place from which they had come; and, though their elder brother entreated them not to leave him, they deliberately shook off the dust of their feet for a testimony against the wicked city, and, taking leave of Walker, rode off, and left him sitting on his horse. Perhaps that hour brought with it more of the feeling of despondency to Jesse Walker than he ever experienced in any other hour of his eventful life; and, stung with disappointment, he said in his haste, 'I will go to the state of Mississippi, and hunt up the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' and immediately turned his horse in that direction, and with a sorrowful heart rode off alone. Having proceeded about eighteen miles he

came to a halt, and entered into a soliloquy on this wise: 'Was I ever defeated before in this blessed work? Never. Did any one ever trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and get confounded? No; and, by the grace of God, I will go back and take St. Louis.' Then, reversing his course, without seeking either rest or refreshment for man or beast, he immediately retraced his steps to the city, and, with some difficulty, obtained lodgings in an indifferent inn, where he paid at the highest rate for everything. Next morning he commenced a survey of the city and its inhabitants. He met with some members of the territorial legislature, who knew him, and said, 'Why, Father Walker, what has brought you here?' His answer was, 'I have come to take St. Louis.' They thought it a hopeless undertaking, and, to convince him that it was so, remarked that the inhabitants were mostly Catholics and infidels, very dissipated and wicked, and that there was no probability that a Methodist preacher could obtain any access to them, and seriously advised him to abandon the enterprise and return to his family, then residing in Illinois. But to all such expressions Walker returned one answer: 'I have come, in the name of Christ, to take St. Louis, and, by the grace of God, I will do it.' His first public experiment was in a temporary place of worship occupied by a handful of Baptists. There were, however, but few present. Nothing special occurred, and he obtained leave to preach again. During the second effort there were strong indications of religious excitement, and the Baptists actually closed their doors against him. He next found a large but unfinished dwelling-house, and succeeded in renting it as it was for ten dollars a month. Passing by the public square he saw some old benches stacked away at the

end of the court house, which had been recently refitted with new ones. These he obtained from the commissioner, had them put on a dray, and removed to his hired house, borrowed tools, and repaired with his own hands such as were broken, and fitted up his largest room for a place of worship. After completing his arrangements he commenced preaching regularly twice on the Sabbath, and occasionally in the evenings between the Sabbaths. At the same time he gave notice that if there were any poor parents who wished their children taught to spell and read he would teach them five days in a week without fee or reward, and if there were any who wished their servants to learn he would teach them on the same terms in the evenings. In order to be always on the spot, and to render his expenses as light as possible, he took up his abode in his own hired house. The chapel room was soon filled with hearers, and the school with children. In the mean time he went to visit his family, and returned with a horseload of provisions and bedding, determined to remain there and push the work till something was accomplished. Very soon a work of grace commenced. About this time an event occurred that seemed at first to be against the success of his mission, but which eventuated in its favor. The hired house changed hands, and he was notified to vacate it in a short time. Immediately he conceived a plan for building a small frame chapel, and, without knowing where the funds were to come from, he put the work under contract. A citizen, owning land across the Mississippi, gave him leave to take the lumber from his forest as a donation. Soon the chapel was raised and covered. The vestrymen of a small Episcopal church, then without a minister, made him a present of their old Bible and cushion. They also gave

him their pews, which he accepted on condition of their being free; and, having unscrewed the shutters, and laid them by, he lost no time in transferring the open pews to his new chapel. New friends came to his relief in meeting his contracts. The chapel was finished, and opened for public worship, and was well filled. The revival received a fresh impulse, and, as the result of the first year's experiment, he reported to Conference a snug little chapel erected and paid for, a flourishing school, and seventy Church members in St. Louis. Of course he was regularly appointed the next year to that mission station, but without any missionary appropriation, and he considered it an honorable appointment. Thus 'Father Walker,' as every one about the city called him, succeeded in taking St. Louis, which, as he expressed it, 'had been the very stronghold of devilism.' Some idea of the changes which had been there effected for the better, may be inferred from the fact that the Missouri Conference held its session in that city October 24, 1822, when William Beauchamp was appointed successor of the indefatigable Walker. St. Louis, now a large and flourishing city, is well supplied with churches and a church-going people."

Having effectually broken the way open for Methodism in Missouri, during sixteen years, Walker, eager for pioneer adventures, went, in 1823, to the Indian tribes up the Mississippi, where he labored till 1830, when the hero of so many fields was esteemed the man for other new work, and was appointed to the extreme North, to Chicago Mission, "where he succeeded," says Peter Cartwright, "in planting Methodism in that then infant city. In 1831 he was sent to the Des Plaines Mission, and organized many small societies in that young and rising country." In 1832 there was a Chicago District

formed, mostly of missionary ground. Walker was superintendent of this district, and missionary to Chicago town; and although he was stricken in years, and well-nigh worn out, having spent a comparatively long life on the frontiers, yet the veteran had the respect and admiration of the whole community, and in 1833 was continued in the City Missionary Station. This year closed his active itinerant life. "He had," says Cartwright, "done effective service as a traveling preacher for more than thirty years, and had lived poor, and suffered much; had won thousands of souls over to Christ, and firmly planted Methodism for thousands of miles on our frontier border. In 1834 he asked for and obtained a superannuated relation, in which he lived till the fifth of October, 1835, and then left the world in holy triumph. He was the first minister who, by the authority of the Methodist Church, gave me my first permit to exhort. We have fought side by side for many years, we have suffered hunger and want together, we have often wept and prayed and preached together; I hope we shall sing and shout together in heaven." [9]

He died, "in confident hope of a blessed immortality," in 1835. He was five feet seven inches high, of slender but vigorous frame, sallow complexion, light hair, prominent cheeks, small blue eyes, a generous and cheerful expression; and dressed always in drab-colored clothes, of the plainest Quaker fashion, with a light-colored beaver hat, "nearly as large as a ladies' parasol." He had extraordinary aptness to win the confidence and sympathy of "backwoodsmen;" his friendships were most hearty, his courage equal to any test, his piety thorough, his talents as a preacher moderate. His great talent was his great character.

[9] Cartwright's Autobiography, p. 491.

Methodism became mighty in Missouri Conference, numbering nearly twenty-four thousand members before the southern secession of 1844; but that event rent the Church to pieces; the war of the rebellion still further devastated the great field. Peace has restored the denomination, and the Missouri Conference still exists, with reorganized plans of usefulness.

During these years men of genuine greatness of character and talents were continually rising up in the western itinerancy. Samuel Parker, born in New Jersey in 1774, and converted in his fourteenth year, was a man of genius, and was called the Cicero of the western ministry. After laboring four years as a local preacher, he was received into the Western Conference in 1805. For three years he traveled in Kentucky, and in 1808 was sent to Miami Circuit, Ohio, which included Cincinnati. Here his natural eloquence attained its climax. The people thronged from great distances to hear him; his word was irresistible, and "wherever he went," says one of his contemporaries, "wondering and weeping audiences crowded about him."[10] He possessed an exceedingly musical voice, a clear, keen mind, an imagination which, though never extravagant, afforded frequent and brilliant illustrations of his subject, while his ardent piety imparted wonderful tenderness and power to his appeals. Withal, his personal appearance was striking before he became attenuated with disease. He was nearly six feet high, had a remarkably intellectual countenance, with a full forehead, and a black, piercing eye.

In 1809 he became presiding elder on a district which included Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. "From the White River, in Indiana, to the farthest settler in Mis-

[10] Finley's Sketches of Western Methodism, p. 206.

souri," says Finley, "did this herald of the cross proclaim the glad tidings of salvation" through four years, and "so 'mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed,'" that the district had to be divided. Its three hundred and eighty-two members, at his beginning, had increased to more than two thousand when he left it. He continued north and west of the Ohio, with increasing influence and success, till 1815, when he was made presiding elder in Kentucky, where his great eloquence commanded general interest. In 1819 he was appointed to lead the itinerants who were extending the Church in the far southwest, on the memorable Mississippi District. They needed such a man; but his health was broken, and it seemed but an appointment to martyrdom. He was ready for it, nevertheless, and when it was announced, at the close of the Conference, in Cincinnati, "it seemed," says a spectator, "that a wave of sympathy rolled over the whole Conference." His malady (pulmonary consumption) rapidly advanced when he reached his new field. He was never indeed able to perform any labor on the district. He sank down and died in 1819. William Winans, whom he had called out to preach, in Ohio, was now in the south, and attended him in death, and followed him to his grave, in Washington, Miss. "He died," says Winans, "not only peacefully, but triumphantly." "Love inspired his whole being, breathed from his lips, and beamed with heavenly radiance from his countenance."

James Axley has left traditions of his character and work in the Church from Indiana to Louisiana. A fellow-laborer (himself one of the most genuine products of nature and the West) has said that Axley "was the most perfect child of nature I ever knew."[11] He was

[11] Peter Cartwright, in Sprague, p. 416.

born on New River, Va., in 1776, removed, in childhood, to Kentucky, where he became a hunter and thrifty farmer, joined the Methodists in 1802, and in 1805 entered the itinerant ministry. He was tossed about, with singular rapidity, in his appointments, from Tennessee to Ohio, from Ohio to the Holston Mountains, from Holston to Opelousas, in Louisiana, back again to Holston, then to the Wabash District, in Indiana, back again to the Holston District for four years, thence to Green River District in Kentucky, and finally to French Broad District, among the Alleghanies of North Carolina. In 1822 he located, near Madisonville, Tenn., where he died in 1838. Through this vast range of his ministerial travels he was one of the most energetic, most popular, and most useful preachers of the times. His pulpit talents were not above mediocrity, his manners utterly unpolished; but he combined with profound piety and much tender sensibility the shrewdest sense, an astonishing aptness of speech, and an exhaustless humor. The latter, however, was usually so well directed that it seemed wisdom itself, arrayed in smiles. Few, if any, of his contemporaries drew larger audiences, for Axley was irresistible to the western people. A bishop of the Church has given us our fullest record of him.[12] "His person was imposing. He was perhaps five feet eight inches high, not corpulent, but very broad and compactly built, formed for strength; his step was firm, his face was square, complexion dark, eyebrows heavy, appearance rugged, and he dressed in the costume of our fathers, with straight-breasted coat, and broad-brimmed hat projecting over a sedate countenance. His wide-spread fame as a natural genius without any early education, and especially the numerous

[12] Bishop Morris, in Finley's Sketches, p. 231.

incidents I had heard of him as a western pioneer, had excited in me a greater desire for his personal acquaintance than that of any other living man I had ever seen, except Jacob Gruber. As I neared him I held out my right hand and received his, when the following salutations were exchanged: 'How are you, Brother Axley?' 'Who are you?' 'My name is Thomas A. Morris.' Then, surveying me from head to foot, he replied, 'Upon my word, I think they were hard pushed for bishop-timber when they got hold of you.' 'That is just what I thought myself, Brother Axley.' 'Why, you look too young for a bishop.' 'As to that, I am old enough to know more and do better.' Turning back with me, we walked to our lodging, being both quartered at the same place. Every hour that I could redeem from Conference and council business was enlivened by his quaint but thrilling narratives of his early travels, labors, and difficulties. He spiced the whole with such apt remarks and consummate good-humor that the attention of the company never faltered. Never was I better entertained or more instructed with the conversation of a fellow-sojourner in one week than with his. There were points of singular contrast in his character. His exterior was rough as a block of granite fresh from the quarry, and his manner of reproving disorderly persons at popular meetings over which he presided was said to indicate severity; yet his conscience was so tender, and his moral sensibility so acute, that a mere suggestion from a friend that he had erred in any given case would draw from him prompt acknowledgment, with a shower of tears. In social intercourse he was both kind and attractive. His conversational talent was of a superior order. Without classical learning, or much pretension to book knowledge, he was such a

master in practical, every-day affairs, that he could not only delight, but instruct sages and divines. He was proverbial for his opposition to slavery and whisky. After he located he supported his family by the labor of his own hands as a farmer, and was wont to testify, on all proper occasions, that his logs were rolled, his house raised, and his grain cut without whisky; and though he had plentiful crops of corn, not the first track of a negro's foot was ever seen in one of his fields."

Sufficient evidence has heretofore been given to show that he shared fully the opinions of the western ministry on the subjects of temperance and slavery. They saw that whisky was becoming the bane of their rude but grand country, and Axley preached famous sermons against the distillation of the "fire-waters." They saw slavery also gradually invading the fair domain, and threatening to dishonor labor and demoralize their social life. The strongest men among them arrayed themselves against it. Not a few intelligent laymen emigrated, like M'Cormick, beyond the Ohio, that they might raise their families away from its menacing evils. "I do not recollect," says Peter Cartwright, "a single Methodist preacher of that day who justified slavery." Many who could not well remove opposed the encroaching barbarism sturdily. Quarterly Conferences acted uncompromisingly against it, and as early as 1808, when all western Methodism was still comprised in the "Old Western Conference," that body enacted stringent antislavery laws, which were signed on the journals by Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree. The latter was at that time a decided abolitionist, as contemporary documents show.

Axley joined the Conference at the same time with Parker and Cartwright. To the latter he was of course

a congenial mind. "We were always," says Cartwright, "bosom friends till he closed his earthly pilgrimage." Cartwright records "an illustration of Axley's extraordinary faith," which is an equal illustration of the character of the times and the country. They were at a camp-meeting in Tennessee, Axley endeavoring to sustain order among a crew of "rowdies" while Cartwright was preaching. "They actually threatened to lay the cowhide over him," says the latter. "He replied with great calmness and firmness that that was not the place for an encounter, and that, if they were really bent on fighting, they must retire outside the encampment. Immediately he found himself in the midst of a crowd there. Axley remarked that he could not possibly go into the fight until he had prayed, and instantly knelt down. He poured forth his heart in a strain of uncommon fervor; the base fellows themselves were actually disarmed, and such an impression of reverence and solemnity came over them that they at once abandoned their impious design, and behaved themselves with perfect decorum. On the Monday following he preached a sermon, under which several of them were melted into tears. When the awakened came forward for the prayers of the Church there were found among them a number of these persons, and, before the meeting closed, some of them professed to have become new creatures in Christ Jesus."

His opposition to spirituous liquors led him to introduce into the General Conference of 1812 a resolution against their use by Church members. It failed; but he repeated the effort in 1816. Many in the Conference opposed him, making merry with his quaint speeches, "He turned his face to the wall and wept," says Laban Clark, who joined him in the measure. He persisted

however, and at last triumphed. "I remember," says Clark, "particularly on the first occasion of my meeting him, Axley made rather a strange and grotesque appearance. He wore a short cloak, and a round Quaker hat, and, as he rode on horseback, made a figure which could hardly fail to arrest the attention of all the passers by. To the boys who ran after him in the street he turned round and said, 'Go along, aint you ashamed of yourselves?' which only made them 'hurrah' the more boisterously. He was evidently a man of great native power, was social and pleasant, and always left the impression that he was living under the influence of the powers of the world to come."

Peter Cartwright was born in Amherst County, Va., in 1785, the son of a soldier of the Revolution, who hated negro as well as white slavery.[13] He early settled in Kentucky, where his son was trained amid the wildest scenes of frontier life, but taught to fear God by his Methodist mother. He grew up therefore thoroughly seasoned with western hardihood, but saved from many of the vices prevalent around him. In his ninth year he heard the itinerant, Jacob Lurton, preach in his father's cabin, and describes him as "a real son of thunder." "My mother," he adds, "shouted aloud for joy."[14] A small class was formed at about four miles distance, to which his good mother walked every week. At last they built a little church, and called it "Ebenezer." Methodism on the old Cumberland Circuit had thrown its spiritual shelter over the wandering family, and chose their adventurous boy, their only son, for one of its chief western pioneers. In his sixteenth year, after dancing at a wedding, he went home with an awakened

[13] Letter of Peter Cartwright to the author. Dec. 28, 1865.
[14] Cartwright's Autobiography, p. 24. New York, 1856.

conscience. Unable to sleep, he spent much of the night on his knees with his praying mother, and, some time afterward, was converted at a camp-meeting. He joined the Church, at "Ebenezer," in 1801, when there were less than twenty-five hundred Methodists and about fifteen traveling preachers west of the Alleghanies. Striking anomaly of human life, possible perhaps nowhere else than in this new world, that this young hunter of the frontier should still, while we trace these lines, be abroad an active apostle of his Church, amid mighty states then unborn, but now equal to more than half of Europe, an empire of liberty and Christianity stretching from the Alleghanies to the Pacific.

In 1802 he was licensed to exhort by Jesse Walker, a congenial spirit. He applied himself to study, conducted public meetings, formed classes, and received "the celebrated James Axley into the Church." The young exhorter actually thus formed the Lexington Circuit in 1803, and the next year Walker was its preacher. At last, in his nineteenth year, urged by his pious mother, but opposed by his father, he went forth as a circuit preacher "under the presiding elder." At the Conference of 1804, held at Mount Gerizim, Ky., he was received on probation. Of all the itinerants of that session he is the only survivor. The bare enumeration of his subsequent "appointments" would cover pages. In Tennessee, Kentucky, in almost every portion of the Northwestern Territory, he fought courageously the battles of his Church; not always with the voice, but sometimes, like Finley and others, he had to use his stout fist against the onset of semi-barbarous mobs. A frontier man, he knew the perils and necessities of frontier life; and when his appeals to the conscience of his sometimes half savage hearers could not prevail, and

especially when the decorum of public worship, or the safety of his congregations has been perilled, he could show himself physically formidable, and make the mob recoil. We need to read the record of such a life as his with somewhat of the moral license of the early frontier spirit. "My voice," he says, "at that day was strong and clear, and I could sing, exhort, pray, and preach almost all the time, day and night." Some of his meetings lasted all night. His circuits were like lines of battle, continually in excitement, if not commotion. Some of his quarterly meetings were not only scenes of spiritual conflict and victory, but of "hand-to hand fights" with the rabble. One of them, on Scioto Circuit, in 1805, was held in the woods. The mob, led on by two champions, who bore "loaded whips," invaded it. Cartwright called from the stand upon two magistrates in the assembly to arrest the leaders, but they replied that it was impossible. He came forward himself, offering to do it for them, but the assailants struck at him. The greatest tumult ensued; the congregation was in confusion; the whole mob pressed upon him and his friends. He seized one after another of the principal rioters, and threw them to the earth, including a drunken magistrate who had taken sides with them. "Just at this moment," he writes, "the ringleader of the mob and I met. He made three passes at me, intending to knock me down. The last time he struck at me, by the force of his own effort he threw the side of his face toward me. It seemed at that moment I had not power to resist temptation, and I struck a sudden blow in the burr of the ear, and felled him to the earth. The friends of order now rushed by hundreds on the mob, knocking them down in every direction. In a few minutes the place became too strait for the mob, and they wheeled,

and fled in every direction; but we secured about thirty prisoners, marched them off to a vacant tent, and put them under guard till Monday morning, when they were tried, and every man was fined to the utmost limits of the law. They fined my old drunken magistrate twenty dollars, and returned him to court, and he was cashiered of his office. On Sunday, when we had vanquished the mob, the whole encampment was filled with mourning; and, although there was no attempt to resume preaching till evening, yet, such was our confused state, there was not then a single preacher on the ground willing to preach, from the presiding elder, John Sale, down. Seeing we had fallen on evil times, my spirit was stirred within me. I said to the elder, 'I feel a clear conscience, for under the necessity of the circumstances we have done right, and now I ask you to let me preach.' 'Do,' said the elder, 'for there is no other man on the ground can do it.' The encampment was lighted up, the trumpet blown, I rose in the stand, and required every soul to leave the tents, and come into the congregation. There was a general rush to the stand. I requested the brethren, if ever they prayed in all their lives, to pray now. My voice was strong and clear, and my preaching was more of an exhortation and encouragement than anything else. My text was, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail.' In about thirty minutes the power of God fell on the congregation in such a manner as is seldom seen. The people fell in every direction, right and left, front and rear. It was supposed that not less than three hundred fell like dead men in battle, and there was no need of calling mourners, for they were strewed all over the camp-ground. Our meeting lasted all night, and Monday and Monday night; and when we closed on Tuesday, there were two

hundred who had professed religion, and about that number joined the Church. Brother Axley and myself pulled together like true yoke-fellows. We were both raised in the backwoods, and well understood frontier life."

Similar scenes were hardly rare on the western frontier. Irreconcileable as they may be to our sense of religious decorum, they are essential illustrations of the times. History cannot evade them, even if we should not feel a lurking sympathy with the rude courage which they too often provoked beyond all self-control.

For nearly seventy years Peter Cartwright has been a Methodist, for nearly sixty-five an itinerant preacher, for about fifty years a presiding elder; twelve times he has shared in the General Conferences of his Church. In his long ministerial life he has not lost six months from his regular work for any cause whatever. "For twenty years of my ministry," he writes, "I often preached twice a day, and sometimes three times. We seldom ever had in those days more than one rest-day in a week, so that I feel very safe in saying that I preached four hundred times a year. I was converted on a camp ground, and for many years of my early ministry, after I was appointed presiding elder, lived in the tented grove from two to three months in the year. I have lived to see this vast western wilderness rise and improve, and become wealthy without a parallel in the history of the world; I have outlived every member of my father's family; I have no father, no mother, no brother, no sister living; I have outlived every member of the class I joined in 1800; I have outlived every member of the Western Conference in 1804; I have outlived nearly every member of the first General Conference that I was elected to, in Baltimore, in 1816; I

have outlived all my early bishops; I have outlived every presiding elder that I ever had when on circuits; and I have outlived hundreds and thousands of my contemporary ministers and members, as well as juniors, and still linger on the mortal shores. Though all these have died they shall live again, and, by the grace of God, I shall live with them in heaven forever. Why I live God only knows. I certainly have toiled and suffered enough to kill a thousand men, but I do not complain. Thank God for health, strength, and grace, that have borne me up, and borne me on; thank God that during my long and exposed life as a Methodist preacher, I have never been overtaken with any scandalous sin, though my shortcomings and imperfections have been without number."

He has received into the Church some twelve thousand members, and led into the itinerancy scores, if not hundreds, of preachers. Rough and hardy as the oak; overflowing with geniality and humor; a tireless worker and traveler; a sagacious counselor, giving often in the strangest disguises of wit and humor the shrewdest suggestions of wisdom; an unfailing friend, an incomparable companion, a faithful patriot, and an earnest Methodist, Peter Cartwright has been, for nearly three generations, one of the most noted, most interesting, most inexplicable men of the West and of Methodism.

David Young's labors, especially in Ohio, were long and successful. He was born in Bedford County, Va., was well trained at home, where he had the then rare advantage of a good library, and by becoming a studious youth, prepared an intelligent and effective manhood. From his seventh year he was seldom without religious reflection. In 1803 he emigrated to Tennessee, where he taught a grammar school; and in the

same year was converted, and became a Methodist. The next year he was "exhorting," and in 1805 joined the Conference. His appointments were for some time in Tennessee; but in 1811 he was sent to Ohio, where he labored, with commanding influence, down to 1849, when he was placed on the "superannuated list." He suffered from disease most of his life, the effect of his early itinerant exposures. His self-education, improving good natural powers, secured him "the first rank among his brother ministers." [15] He was always master of his subject. "His logical method, associated with fervency of spirit, enchained his auditory. Sometimes his pathos was overwhelming, for he was often a weeping prophet. Fond of reading, he had in store a large amount of general literature, which gave great interest to his preaching. His voice was pleasant, though sometimes shrill and penetrating; his gesticulation graceful, and his whole manner peculiarly solemn and impressive." He led into the communion and ministry of the Church its present senior bishop, who describes him as "tall and slender, but straight and symmetrical. His step was elastic. He wore the straight-breasted coat, and the broad-brimmed hat usual among early Methodist preachers. His yellow hair, all combed back, hung in great profusion about his neck and shoulders, giving him an imposing appearance. His blue eyes were prominent, and exceedingly penetrating. I heard a Virginia lawyer say that he could withstand the direct contact of any preacher's eye in the pulpit he ever saw, except David Young's; but his always made him quail. In manners he was a finished gentleman of the Virginia school. He abounded in incident, and had a rare talent at narration, both in and out of the pulpit. Yet, as a

[15] Rev Dr. Trimble, in Sprague, p. 431.

minister, he was grave and dignified. No man conducted a public religious service more solemnly or impressively than he did, especially in reading the Holy Scriptures or in prayer. His deep religious emotion was always apparent in his prayers and his sermons. On special occasions, while applying the momentous truths of the gospel, he stood on his knees in the pulpit, and, with many tears, entreated sinners, as in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. Among the most celebrated Methodist preachers of the great West fifty years ago were William Beauchamp, Samuel Parker, and David Young, each of whom excelled in his own way. Beauchamp was the most instructive, Parker the most practical and persuasive, and Young the most overpowering. Under the preaching of Beauchamp light seemed to break on the most bewildered understanding; under that of Parker, multitudes of people melted like snow before an April sun; while, under the ministry of Young, I knew whole assemblies electrified, as suddenly and as sensibly as if coming in contact with a galvanic battery. I have myself, under some of his powerful appeals, felt the cold tremors passing over me, and the hair on my head apparently standing on end. On camp-meeting occasions, where the surroundings were unusually exciting, it has sometimes happened that vast numbers of persons have simultaneously sprung from their seats, and rushed up as near to the pulpit as they could, apparently unconscious of having changed positions." He died at Zanesville in 1853. His descent to the grave was like a serene going down of the sun. "I am calmly," he said, "though through great physical suffering, nearing my better home."[16]

John Collins has already appeared in our pages as

[16] Obituary, by Rev. J. W. White, in Western Christian Advocate.

founding the Church in Cincinnati. He was born in New Jersey in 1769, and was of Quaker parentage. When very young his attention was drawn to religious subjects by hearing a hymn sung as he passed the house of a neighbor. For several years he struggled against his convictions, living a moral life, but attaining no rest for his soul. He went to Charleston, S. C., in order to escape his local associations, and, if possible, become a more decided Christian away from the observations of his acquaintances, but failed, and, returning home, was converted in 1794. He soon began to preach, but with much self-distrust, and doubt of his divine call to the ministry. Learner Blackman, his brother-in-law, was saved by his first sermon, and Collins now hesitated no more, especially as he further ascertained that ten or twelve of his kindred were awakened by the same discourse.[17] His word, even his casual allusions to religion, seemed to have remarkable effect. He had been appointed major of militia, but now resigned the office, and sold his uniform to his successor, saying to him, "My friend, when you put these on, think of the reason why I laid them off." The brief sentence was "a nail fastened in a sure place." It so impressed the young officer that he also resigned the post, and became a Methodist.[18]

Blackman went to the West, where, as has been noticed, he became a champion of the itinerancy from Ohio to Louisiana. Collins followed him in 1803, and located his family in Clermont County, about twenty-five miles west of Cincinnati. He thus became a co-laborer with M'Cormick, Gatch, Tiffin, and Scott in

[17] Sketch of the Life of Rev. John Collins, by Judge M'Lean, p. 11. Cincinnati, 1852.

[18] Rev. J. P. Wright, in Western Christian Adv., October, 1847.

founding the denomination in the Northwestern Territory.

In 1807 he joined the itinerancy. His appointments, with two intervals of "location," were all in Ohio for thirty years. In 1837 his infirmities required him to retreat into a "superannuated relation." He lived yet about seven years a serene Christian life, venerated by the Church, beloved for his memorable services, his gentle manners, his catholicity, his pathetic eloquence, and his cheerful piety. He died a blessed death, in 1845. "Happy! happy! happy!" were his last words.

The fruits of his ministry abounded in all parts of Ohio, for his superior character and talents gave him extraordinary influence among all classes of the population. Among other eminent citizens he led into the Church John M'Lean, afterward judge of the Supreme Court of the nation, and the biographer of the itinerant. Born in New Jersey in 1785, M'Lean emigrated successively to Western Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio. When eighteen years old he began his legal education, in Cincinnati, under Arthur St. Clair. He gave himself meanwhile to general studies in almost every department of science and literature. He became skeptical in religion, but, after his admission to the bar at Lebanon, Ohio, in 1807, he was rescued by Collins. One of the judge's biographers says, "Collins had an appointment to preach in a private house at Lebanon. The people crowded the rooms, and many had to stand about the doors. Among these was M'Lean, who stood where he could hear distinctly, though, as he thought, unobserved by the speaker. During the discourse, however, he fell under the notice of Collins's keen eye, and his prepossessing appearance attracted at the

first glance the notice of the preacher. He paused a moment, and mentally offered up a short prayer for the conversion of the young man. Resuming his discourse, the first word he uttered was 'eternity.' That word was spoken with a voice so solemn and impressive that its full import was felt by M'Lean. All things besides appeared to be nothing in comparison to it. He soon sought an acquaintance with Collins, and, a short time after this, accompanied him to one of his appointments in the country, and, at the close of the sermon, he remained in class to inquire what he must do to be saved. On their return to Lebanon Collins told his young friend that he had a request to make of him which was reasonable, and he hoped would not be rejected. The request was, that he would read the New Testament at least fifteen minutes every day till his next visit. The promise was made, and strictly performed. After this a covenant was entered into by the parties to meet each other at the throne of grace at the setting of the sun. The agreed suppliants had not continued their daily, united, and earnest prayers long before M'Lean was justified by faith, and realized the great blessing of 'the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'"[19]

The United States never had a more upright or more honorable citizen, nor American Methodism a more faithful member than Judge M'Lean. He was commanding in person, tall, and symmetrical in stature, with a Platonic brow, thoughtful, tranquil features, and the most modest but cordial manners. He was an able statesman, almost infallible in his cautious judgment, a thoroughly devoted Christian, persevering and punctual in the minutest duties of his Church, and catholic in his

[19] Bishop Clark, in Ladies' Repository, p. 66. Cincinnati, 1859.

regard for good men of whatever sect. Lawyer, member of Congress, supreme judge of Ohio, member of the cabinets of Monroe and Adams, and supreme justice of the Republic, he passed through a long life unblemished, and above all his titles, gloried in that of a Christian.

M'Lean says of Collins that as both a local and an itinerant minister it is supposed that the Methodist Church in the West has not had a more successful preacher. He was a marked man in his person. He always wore the primitive Quaker dress. His forehead was high, his eyes small, but very expressive, and over all his features was spread an air of refinement, a sort of intellectual and benevolent glow, that immediately won the interest of the spectator. And his spirit and manners corresponded with these indications. The unction of divine grace abode upon his soul. He was always interesting in the pulpit, and not unfrequently extremely affecting. A very fountain of pathos welled up in his devout heart, and seldom did he preach without weeping himself, and constraining his audience to weep. One who heard him several days in succession, at a quarterly meeting, said, "I came to the conclusion that the 'British Spy' only dreamed of a pulpit orator, that it was left for me to behold one."

CHAPTER X.

METHODISM IN THE WEST, CONTINUED: 1804–1820.

John Strange — His great Eloquence — Russell Bigelow's Character and Eloquence — Bishop Thomson's Account of one of his Forest Sermons — Sketch of Henry B. Bascom — Of Thomas A. Morris — Of John P. Durbin — Advance of Methodism in the Southwest — Elisha W. Bowman in Louisiana—His Explorations and Hardships — Scene between Asbury and Jacob Young at Governor Tiffin's Home — Young in the Southwest — Lorenzo Dow there — Axley's Sufferings and Achievements — Sketch of William Winans — Other Southwestern Itinerants.

John Strange, a Virginian, born in 1789, was one of the most successful evangelists of Methodism in Ohio, whither he went in his twentieth year. He commenced preaching in 1811; in many parts of the northwestern territory he labored powerfully, though oppressed with chronic disease, down to 1832, when he "died in great peace," at Indianapolis, while at the head of the Indianapolis District. "He was," says a fellow-laborer, "one of the brightest lights of the American pulpit, in the Valley of the Mississippi, in the early part of the present century. He was formed by nature to be eloquent. He was tall and slender, and stood remarkably erect. His bearing was that of one born to command; and yet combined with this there was a gentleness and softness of manner that never failed to win the hearts of those with whom he came in contact. His hair was raven-black, and his eyes blue and generally mild; but, when he was animated, they became remarkably brilliant and penetrating. His

voice was unsurpassed, as far as my knowledge extends, for its compass, and the sweetness, richness, and variety of its tones. He could elevate it, without apparent effort, so as to be heard distinctly twenty or thirty rods in the open air; and yet it would retain all its melody. He could sing, pray, or preach for any length of time, without becoming in the least degree hoarse. Such was the power and attractiveness of both his matter and manner, that, when he would ascend the stand at camp-meeting, many who were scattered through the surrounding woods would hasten with all possible speed to the camp ground, that they might lose nothing that he should say. There were times when his audience were held spell-bound by his eloquence, and sometimes they were even raised *en masse* from their seats. Few men were ever more devoted to the interests of the Church, or more habitually under the influence of an all-pervading sense of duty, than John Strange. When, in 1814, he traveled White Water circuit, then a sparsely settled frontier, he would go from one block-house to another in the exercise of his ministry, while he was actually obliged to carry his gun upon his shoulder, to defend himself from the Indians. Such self-sacrificing efforts greatly endeared him to the people, and his monthly visits to the block-houses and forts were hailed with delight. Language cannot describe the pathetic and impressive manner in which, on such occasions, he would sing the hymn beginning, 'And are we yet alive!' The hymn itself was most touching; and, taken in connection with his manner of singing it, and the circumstances which it so aptly described, it was quite irresistible." [1]

A bishop of the Church describes his appearance in

[1] Rev. F. C. Holliday, in Sprague, p. 505.

the pulpit as "peculiar, almost angelic." He 'had a certain ethereal expression of countenance. When he opened his lips you heard a voice, clear and shrill, of immense compass and perfect melody, that well-nigh entranced you. Presently the spirit within would begin to kindle, and then his countenance would take on a seraphi glow as if it were a fountain of sunbeams. His intonations, his emphasis, his pauses, every thing pertaining to his elocution, seemed exactly adapted to convey his thoughts in the most fitting, graceful, and effective manner. There was no appearance of any great effort in his preaching; it seemed rather like the simple moving of a wonderful mind, in the bright and lofty path which the Creator had constituted as its native element. I should pronounce him unhesitatingly a man of the highest style of genius. He had a great fund of ready wit, and always knew how to say the best thing, at the best time, and in the best manner.[2]"

Traditions of his eloquence and usefulness are rife through all Ohio. He was an accomplished and heroic soldier of the cross, and won innumerable trophies. Just before he died, his last words to a friend were, "Serve God and fight the devil."

Superior even to Strange, as a preacher, was Russell Bigelow, a man of inferior presence, but of astonishing eloquence, of which the elder Methodists of Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio never tire of speaking, though they can only describe it as "indescribable." He was born in New Hampshire, lived in Canada, where he became a Methodist, and emigrated to Ohio in 1812. In his twentieth year he began to exhort, and in 1814 joined the conference, and commenced his itinerant labors in Kentucky. In 1816 he was sent to Ohio, where he con-

[2] Bishop Ames, in Sprague, p. 511.

tinued to labor as circuit preacher, Indian missionary, and presiding elder, down to 1834, when he was returned superannuated, and the next year died, "shouting the praises of his heavenly King."[3] President Thomson, (afterward bishop,) when a young student, was attracted by his fame to hear him at a camp meeting. "Never," he writes, "was I so disappointed in a man's personal appearance. He was below the middle stature, and clad in coarse, ill-made garments. His uncombed hair hung loosely over his forehead. His attitudes and motions were exceedingly ungraceful, and every feature of his countenance was unprepossessing. The long hair that came down to his cheeks concealed a broad and prominent forehead; the keen eye that peered from beneath his heavy and overjetting eyebrows, beamed with intelligence; the prominent cheek bones, projecting chin, and large nose, indicated any thing but intellectual feebleness; while the wide mouth, depressed at its corners, the slightly expanded nostrils, and the *tout ensemble* of his expression, indicated both sorrow and love, and were in admirable keeping with the message, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' His words were pure and well-chosen, his accent never misplaced, his sentences grammatical, artistically constructed, and well arranged, both for harmony and effect. Having stated and illustrated his position clearly, he laid broad the foundation of his argument, and piled stone upon stone, hewed and polished, until he stood upon a majestic pyramid, with heaven's own light around him, pointing the astonished multitude to a brighter home beyond the sun. His argument being completed, his peroration commenced. The whole universe seemed now animated by its Creator

[3] Finley's Sketches, p. 414.

to aid him in persuading the sinner to return to God, and the angels commissioned to descend from heaven to strengthen him. As he closed his discourse, every energy of his mind and body seemed stretched to the utmost point of tension. His soul appeared too great for its tenement; his lungs labored; his arms were lifted; the perspiration, mingled with tears, flowed in a steady stream from his face, and everything about him seemed to say, 'O that mine head were waters!' The audience were well-nigh paralyzed beneath the avalanche of thought that descended upon them. I lost the man, but the subject was all in all. I returned from the ground, dissatisfied with myself, and saying within me, 'O that I were a Christian!' He preached to audiences as large, and with results as astonishing, as I have ever witnessed. He was a perfect gentleman. While the circles of fashion delighted to honor him, he 'condescended to men of low estate.' He asked no one to stand in his place in the hour of trial; yet, after the sharpest conflict and most glorious mental conquest, he was ready to wash the feet of the humblest saint. Moreover, he seemed to have a method of hiding and diminishing his own excellences, while he sought to magnify those of others. He was, however, as far as possible from anything mean or groveling; indeed, there was an exquisite delicacy about all his thoughts, illustrations, and manners. His mind seemed filled with beautiful analogies, by which he could rise from the material to the spiritual, and make an easy path to heaven from any point of earth. Wherever he went he was hailed as a messenger of God, and whenever he departed, it seemed as if an angel were taking leave."

Along with these extraordinary men young Henry

B. Bascom appeared in the Western itinerancy. Born in Pennsylvania in 1796, he removed to Kentucky, and thence to Ohio in 1812, and the same year became a class-leader and exhorter. The next year he joined the conference, and began the itinerant career, which soon rendered his fame national, as one of the most noted pulpit orators of the new world. Down to 1823 he filled laborious appointments in Ohio, Western Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. In the last year he was elected chaplain to Congress, through the influence of Henry Clay. At the close of the session of Congress "he spent some time in Baltimore and its neighborhood, and by the remarkable power and splendor of his preaching well-nigh entranced a large portion of the community. From Baltimore he proceeded to Philadelphia, and thence to Harrisburg, and, wherever he preached, attracted an immense throng of admiring hearers. Having finished this eastern tour he obtained a transfer to the Pittsburgh Conference, and was stationed in the city of Pittsburgh. In his second year in this conference he was appointed the conference missionary. In 1827 he was elected president of Madison College, in Uniontown, Pa. He accepted the place, and, in his inaugural address, displayed a degree of rhetorical force and beauty that quite electrified his audience. In 1829 he resigned the presidency of Madison College, and accepted an agency for the American Colonization Society. In 1832 he was elected professor of Moral Science and Belles-lettres, in Augusta College, Kentucky. Here he remained about ten years. In 1838 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Conn.; and the same degree was subsequently conferred by two or three other institutions. In 1845 he

was honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws from the La Grange College in Alabama.[1]

He was a delegate in the General Conference of 1844, when the Church was divided, was prominently active in that event, and shared in the Southern Methodist Convention at Louisville in 1845, and also in the Southern General Conference of 1846, by which he was appointed editor of the Southern Methodist Quarterly Review. The General Conference of 1849 elected him bishop. On the last Sunday of July, 1850, he preached his last sermon in St. Louis; an effort of great eloquence, occupying two hours. In the ensuing September he died at Louisville, aged fifty-four years.

In person he was a model of physical dignity and beauty; tall, well-proportioned, with perfectly symmetrical features, black and dazzling eyes, and a forehead expanded and lofty, "a very throne of intellect." He was fastidious in his apparel, reticent in his manners, and habitually seemed morbidly self-conscious. He published a volume of sermons; but they give no explanation of his peculiar eloquence, and will hardly bear critical examination. He was self-educated, and though very thoroughly so, escaped not the usual defects of self-training. His style was elaborate, abounded in new coined words, and was sometimes grandiloquent; his imagination was exuberant, too often excessive; his argumentation complicated, his thoughts abrupt and fragmentary. His sermons were brilliant mosaics, apparently composed of passages which had been laboriously prepared, at long intervals, and without much relation to the discourse as a whole. They lacked simplicity; were artificial, without the facility or ease which characterizes the mastery of art by disguising its labor.

[1] Sprague, p. 536, and Memoir by Bishop Kavanagh.

But, in spite of his defects, his power has seldom been rivaled in the American pulpit; he was a wonder of genius to the people, and drew them in multitudes which no temple could accommodate.

Thomas A. Morris, a man entirely contrasted with Bascom, and destined to much more extensive service in the Church, joined the itinerancy in 1816. He was born on the west side of the Kanawha River, Kanawha County, five miles above Charlestown, in Western Virginia, in 1794.[5] In an affectionate tribute to his friend, David Young, he makes some allusions to his own religious history: "Mr. Young," he says, "was one of the few Methodist preachers whom I knew prior to my becoming a Methodist. Our acquaintance began in the fall of 1812, when he was presiding elder on Muskingum District, then including in its ample range Zanesville, Marietta, and Northwestern Virginia, where I resided, and where he was perfectly at home, being himself a native of Washington County, Virginia. Most of my early impressions and views of Methodism were derived from him. It is true, I had felt conviction for sin from childhood, and that Robert Caseboult, then a class-leader, had taken interest for me, and talked with me, before I heard Young, and I was seriously inquiring for the way of life. But in July, 1813, while I listened to David Young, preaching at a camp-meeting on the parable of the sower, I was brought to form a solemn purpose to seek earnestly for salvation till I should obtain it. In August I joined a small country class on trial. I had prayed in secret for months, but made little progress till I took this decisive step, and thus drew a separating line from my irreligious associates. The conflict with sin thus renewed continued

[5] Extract from one of his letters, in Western Christian Advocate.

till some time in November, when I obtained some relief and comfort, and on Christmas-day I received a clear sense of pardon and a full 'spirit of adoption.' In the mean time I missed none of Young's quarterly meetings. At one of them he baptized me in the presence of a multitude; and the same day on which he poured the water on my head the Lord poured plentifully his Spirit into my heart. When I was recommended by the society for license to preach, he examined me before the quarterly conference. He also wrote and signed my first license to preach, dated April 2, 1814. In 1815 he employed me as junior preacher on a circuit, and in 1816 I was admitted on trial by the Ohio Conference. From that till 1818, being separated in the work, our acquaintance was perpetuated by free correspondence; but from 1818 to 1820, he, being superannuated, was my constant hearer in Zanesville, where he resided. He continued his efforts in every practicable way for my improvement, and, indeed, till I graduated to elder's orders, he took as much interest in my ministerial education as if I had been his own son."[6] Years later he remarks: "Reared in a rural district of a new country, amid agricultural pursuits, I was inured to toils and perils, which have been of service to me in every relation of subsequent life. 'By grace I am what I am.' An experience of over fifty years confirms my conviction that in Christ alone are pardon, peace, and heaven. With him in view none need fail. 'Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' The first seven years of my regular ministry were years of some affliction and much discouragement

[6] "My Father in the Gospel," by Bishop T. A. Morris, in Ladies' Repository.

consequent thereon. Among the forms of disease under which I suffered were liver complaint, erysipelas, chills and fever, nervous prostration and depression, and inflammatory rheumatism, to all of which was finally added paralysis of my left foot, hand, and eye. I have ever continued in the work through all these afflictions; and by God's blessing upon constant horseback exercise, irrespective of season or weather, I recovered my health."

His itinerant ministry in the West was extensive and successful down to 1834, when he was appointed the first editor of the Western Christian Advocate, at Cincinnati, and issued the first number of that influential paper on the 2d of May. In 1836 he was elected bishop, which office he has continued to sustain with pre-eminent wisdom down to our day, being for many years the senior of the episcopate. During the perilous crises of the denomination, in the antislavery controversy and the southern secession, he has guided the Church with unwavering prudence. In the hour of our greatest national trial he wrote with characteristic serenity, and a foresight which now seems prophetic: "I am buoyant in spirit, very seldom feel discouraged. I am hopeful as to the world's conversion; believing that will be the final result of Christ's Gospel. I am confident that Methodism will contribute its share in that enterprise; that it will survive all opposition, and triumph gloriously. I am decidedly hopeful as to our country. I believe that the rebellion will be entirely conquered, the union of states re-established, slavery abolished, the law vindicated, confidence and social order restored; that we shall have a stronger government, a greater and better country than ever, more respected at home and abroad, with an increasing tide of prosperity; and, finally, that

the gospel of the grace of God will have less obstruction, and will operate more effectively hereafter than heretofore. It is true, I may not witness all these desired results, for with me 'time is short;' yet I take a lively interest in them. I desire the prayers of all good people, that the grace of Christ in me may triumph over all the evils of my fallen nature, and save me in heaven."

Bishop Morris is short in stature, corpulent, with a ruddy complexion, and an intellectual brow; extremely cautious in speech, and reserved in manners; brief in his sermons, not usually exceeding thirty minutes, but exceedingly pertinent in thought, and terse and telling in style; among his familiar friends a most entertaining talker, given to reminiscences of early itinerant adventures and humorous anecdotes; a man of most wholesome mind, tranquil piety, and soundest judgment. He has contributed considerably to the literature of the Church in a volume of sermons, remarkable for their condensed sense, practical appropriateness, and pure and vigorous style; a volume of biographical and historical sketches of the western ministry, and numerous editorial and other fragmentary productions. He lingers in broken health, but in the unbroken affection and veneration of the Church.

Another pre eminent preacher, John P. Durbin, entered the western itinerancy in 1818, though his name does not appear in the Minutes till 1820. He was born in Bourbon County, Ky., in 1800. His education up to his fourteenth year was of the commonest kind of the frontier. At fourteen years of age he was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker in Paris, Ky., and served out his time. In the autumn of 1818 he was converted. One of his young friends was pungently convicted, struggled

hard and long, and was powerfully and sudden y converted in his presence. He assumed that his experience must be of the same kind in order to be genuine; but as it was gradual and tranquil, without violent signs, he began to distrust it, when, by a gentle, yet clear impression on his mind, he was convinced that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned his sins and accepted him in the Redeemer.

He soon felt that it was his duty to preach the gospel, although he had not yet become a member of the Church. As if by inspiration, his grandfather, a pioneer of Methodism in Kentucky, said to him suddenly one day, "Are you not concerned about preaching the gospel?" It was to him like a flash of lightning in a clear sky. He took counsel of that early frontier apostle, Benjamin Lakin, joined the Church one week in November, and in the next week another of the apostles of the West, Absalom Hunt, asked a recommendation for him to the quarterly Conference, where he was licensed to preach, by still another western apostle, Alexander Cummings, and sent to Limestone Circuit. The next year the "old Western Conference" was divided, and he went alone into the northwest corner of Ohio, where the Indians still roved, to look after some one hundred members of the Church, who were scattered through the wilderness over a circuit of some two hundred miles.

Here he began his studies in the cabins, where there was but one room, which served for chapel, parlor, kitchen, dining-room, and chamber for the whole family. On this circuit he found an old German who had Dr. Clarke's Commentary in numbers. He borrowed them, slipped two numbers at a time into a tin canister about four inches in diameter, and lashed it behind his saddle.

and thus carried it round his circuit. As soon as preaching was over, and the class dismissed, he sat down in the midst of a frontier family, with pen and ink, to study and take notes of Clarke, especially on the Pentateuch and New Testament. Not a line escaped him. To this book he added Wesley's and Fletcher's works, all of which he thoroughly mastered in the western huts, generally reading in the winter by firelight, which was made by pine-knots and dry wood, prepared by the boys, who used to wonder at him as a living marvel.

The next year he was sent into Indiana, and had for his colleague James Collord, later, for many years, the printer of the Methodist Book Concern, New York. At Collord's instance he began to study English grammar, and from him he received much instruction. He used to commit the rules to memory, and read the examples and notes as he rode on horseback from one appointment to another.

Toward the close of the year he attracted the notice of Dr. Martin Ruter, who advised him to study Latin and Greek, and gave him a grammar or two. He studied indefatigably, and, as he was stationed the third year in Hamilton, Ohio, about twelve miles from the Miami University, (at Oxford,) he used to go to the university on Monday, stay all the week, pursuing his studies, and return on Friday evening to prepare for the Sunday. At first this caused some dissatisfaction among the people; but when they saw his thirst for knowledge, and his fidelity and efficiency on Sunday, they had the good sense to approve his course. The next year he was stationed in Lebanon, and was still guided by the counsels of Ruter. The family in which he resided there still relate with interest the peculiar industry of their boarder. He transcribed the Latin

and Greek grammars, and putting the copy on pasteboard, suspended it before him for more easy reference. The next year he was stationed in Cincinnati, and was admitted to the Cincinnati College, with the personal countenance of Dr. Ruter and the late President Harrison. Here he finished his collegiate course, and was admitted to the degree of A. M. without being required to take first the degree of A. B.

After taking his degree at Cincinnati, he was appointed Professor of Languages in Augusta College, Ky., and spent the ensuing year in traveling to recruit his health, and to collect money for the college. In this way he first became known in the eastern cities. In 1831, without his knowledge, and in his absence, the Senate of the United States, by a large vote, elected him chaplain. His sermons in the capitol are remembered still for their originality and power.

In 1832 he was elected professor of natural sciences in the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., but resigned immediately upon being elected editor of the "Christian Advocate and Journal." In 1834 he was elected president of Dickinson College. In 1842 he had leave of absence to visit Europe and the East. He returned in 1843, was a member of the General Conference of 1844, and took a prominent part in the great struggle which divided the Church. His speech in reply to Bishop Soule, and the rejoinder to the Protest of the southern party, are notable evidences of his power in that body. In 1844 he published his "Observations in Europe," and in 1845 his "Observations in the East." He retired from the college in 1845, and subsequently had charge of stations in Philadelphia, and also traveled the Philadelphia District. In 1850 he was appointed unanimously, by the bishops, missionary secretary, in

the place of Dr. Pitman, who had resigned on account of ill health. The General Conference of 1852 reappointed him to the same post, which he has ever since occupied with admirable ability.

Dr. Durbin is distinguished both as a preacher and an executive officer. It is difficult to describe his preaching. He begins with a tone, look, and style which would at once damp all favorable expectation were it not for his general fame. The statement of his subject, and the outline of his discourse, are not usually remarkable; but as he advances some unique thought, or some ordinary thought uniquely presented, startles the interest of the hearer, and his attention is riveted through the remainder of the sermon. The entire self-possession and agreeable facility with which the preacher proceeds in his discourse delights the hearer by the relief which his manner thus affords to his feeble and peculiar voice. It is similar to pleasant, artless, but intelligent conversation. The frequent occurrence of striking passages, striking often by their beauty, but often also by the mere manner of their utterance, yet always endued with a strange, a mystic power over the soul of the hearer, calls forth spontaneous ejaculations or sudden tears. He has also a habit of introducing into almost every discourse some odd or equivocal speculative suggestion which never fails to provoke thought on the part of his hearers.

His sermons are usually long, but no one tires of them; no one hears the last sentence without regret, nor leaves the church without a vivid, if not a profound, impression of the discourse. His language is remarkably simple. He excels in illustration, in picturesque description, and in pathos.

Men of genius are usually men of strong sensibility—

and this is one secret of their power; but at the same time it renders them liable to variable moods, especially to failures in public speaking. Dr. Durbin's failures were not infrequent; but his hearers, if sent away sometimes with a downright disappointment, knew that at the next time they should probably be more than compensated by one of his triumphant efforts; that the sun, temporarily behind the mists, will again burst forth and blaze in the zenith. A writer in the "Southern Christian Advocate," speaking of his first sermon in Philadelphia, says: "In the Academy it was that the western professor preached his first sermon to an eastern audience; nor did his effort justify his fame more than his appearance, for it was a failure. And the wiseacres said loudly, 'I told you it was a goose, and not a swan.' The young professor was disheartened, so that although he preached other sermons, not so unsuccessful, yet he left the people only in a state willing enough to hear him again, but not especially anxious. A year elapsed, and he was again in the Academy pulpit, and the subject of his first sermon was reannounced: the divinity of our Lord. It was then a swan's song, sweet, clear, full, transcendent; only not a death-burst."

He has been distinguished by executive ability in every sphere of his public life; in no one of them has he ever failed. A capacity for details, practical skill, promptness, energy that never tires, because it moves always calmly, though incessantly, the power to carry with him the interest of the people, these have been the elements of his strength, and have rendered him one of the most capable officers in the Church.

Thus did the West raise up, in these years, men who were not only adapted to its own peculiar frontier work,

out some of whom, by their genius and self-culture, were fitted to take the highest positions in the denomination, and to become the chief attractions of its eastern pulpits. They were now extending Methodism, with a sort of triumphal march, all over the "Redstone country," the Northwestern Territory, the Holston Mountain Valleys, Kentucky, and Tennessee. It had already become the predominant form of religion in these vast regions, and was moulding into Christian civilization their rapidly growing populations. Meanwhile its itinerants were extending their victories southward in the Valley of the Mississippi. We have followed Gibson in his romantic and heroic mission to Natchez as early as 1799, and seen the labors and sufferings of his first humble itinerant reinforcements, and the arrival of Learner Blackman in 1804, as also the westward advance of the South Carolina Conference itinerants, and the southward progress of those of Eastern Tennessee into Alabama, all pushing southwesterly toward the standard planted on the distant Mississippi by Gibson.

From the Western Conference of 1805 Asbury dispatched Elisha W. Bowman to survey the still farther South, and introduce Methodism among the English settlements of Louisiana. He made his way to New Orleans and Opelousas, and the next year the name of the latter appears, for the first time, in the annual Minutes, with Bowman as its circuit preacher. It is placed under the control of Blackman, who had hitherto been traveling the solitary circuit of the South Mississippi, that of Natchez, but who now became presiding elder of the "Mississippi District," which was first reported in 1806. There remains a long letter from Bowman to Burke, giving an interesting account of his exploration, in which he says his passage was "through a perilous wil-

derness to the city of New Orleans."[7] "As for the settlements of this country," he continues, "there are none that are composed of Americans. From Baton Rouge, the Spanish garrison, which stands on the east bank of the Mississippi River, down two hundred miles, it is settled immediately on each bank of the river by French and Spaniards. When I reached the city I was much disappointed in finding but few American people there, and a majority of that few may truly be called the beasts of men. On Sunday, when I came to the Capitol, I found the doors all locked, and the house inaccessible. I found a few drunken sailors and Frenchmen about the walks of the house, and I preached to them in the open air. The next Sunday, when I came with my landlord and a few others, we found the doors again locked, and I again preached to ten or twelve persons in the open air. I went again to the officers, but got no satisfaction. In the evening, as I passed along the street, I heard them pouring out heavy curses on the Methodists, and saying, 'He is a Methodist; lock him out.' And they told me plainly I was not to have the privilege of the house. One of the officers told me that the Methodists were a dangerous people, and ought to be discouraged. The next Sunday I preached to a few straggling people in the open street. The Lord's day is the day of general rant in this city. Public balls are held, merchandise of every kind is carried on, public sales wagons running, and drums beating; and thus is the Sabbath spent. I sought in vain for a house to preach in. Several persons offered to rent me a house, but I have not money to rent one. My expenses I found to be about two dollars a day for myself and horse, and

[7] It is given entire in Bishop M'Tyeire's account of Nolley, in "Biographical Sketches of Itinerant Ministers," p. 254.

my money pretty well spent. I tried to sell my horse, but could not get forty dollars for him. Thus I was in this difficult situation, without a friend to advise me. I was three hundred miles from Brother Blackman, and could get no advice from him; and what to do I did not know. I could have no access to the people, and to go back to Natchez is to do nothing, as there was a sufficient supply of preachers for that part; to leave my station without Mr. Asbury's direction was like death to me, and to stay here I could do nothing. But, by inquiring, I heard of a settlement of American people about two hundred miles to the west and northwest. By getting a small boat, and crossing the lakes, I could reach the Opelousas country; and, as I was left to think by myself, I thought this most advisable. I accordingly, on the 17th day of December, shook off the dirt from my feet against this ungodly city of New Orleans, and resolved to try the watery waste and pathless desert. I traveled fifty miles up the Mississippi River, and crossed to a river that forces itself out of the Mississippi, and runs into the sea in a southwest direction, down which river I traveled fifty miles, and then turned a western course fifteen miles, through a cypress swamp, to the lake. Here the mosquitoes like to have eaten up both me and my horse. A few Spaniards lived on this lake. I got two large canoes of them, and built a platform on them, on which I put my horse. I hired two of the Spaniards to go with me across the lakes, for which I paid them thirteen dollars and a half, and, through the mercy of God, I had a safe passage through four lakes and a large bay. I landed a little south of the mouth of the river O'Tash. A few Frenchmen are living at the mouth of the river, and a few American families are scattered along this bay and river. I have

now three dollars left, but God is as able to feed me two years on two dollars as he was to feed Elijah at the brook, or five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. I traveled up the west side of the river O'Tash eighty miles. A few families of Americans are scattered among them, but I could not find two families together. I then passed through a small tribe of Indians, and crossed the Vermillion River, which runs into the sea in a southwest direction. The next day I reached the Opelousas country, and the next I reached the Catholic church. I was surprised to see race paths at the church door. Here I found a few Americans, who were swearing with almost every breath; and when I reproved them, they told me that the priest swore as hard as they did. They said he would play cards and dance with them every Sunday evening after mass. And, strange to tell, he keeps a racehorse; in a word, practices every abomination. I told them plainly if they did not quit swearing they and their priest would go to hell together."

About twenty miles farther he found another settlement of American people. "They know," he says, "very little more about the nature of salvation than the untaught Indians. Some of them, after I had preached to them, asked me what I meant by the fall of man, and when it was that he fell. Thus they are perishing for lack of knowledge, and are truly in a pitiable condition. I have to teach them to sing, and in fact to do everything that is like worshiping God. I find it also very difficult to get them to attend meetings, for if they come once they think they have done me a very great favor."

About thirty miles farther he found still another small settlement of English people, who were in as

low a state of ignorance as the others. "But," he says, "I get as many of them together as I can, and preach Jesus Christ to them." "O, my God, have mercy on the souls of this people!" adds the adventurous itinerant. "Every day that I travel I have to swim through creeks or swamps, and I am wet from my head to my feet; and some days, from morning till night, I am dripping with water. I tie all my 'plunder' fast on my horse, and take him by the bridle, and swim sometimes a hundred yards, and sometimes farther. My horse's legs are now skinned and rough to his hock joints, and I have the rheumatism in all my joints. About eighty miles from here, I am informed, there is a considerable settlement of American people; but I cannot get to them at this time as the swamps are swimming for miles; but as soon as the waters fall I intend to visit them. I have great difficulties in this country, as there are no laws to suppress vice of any kind, so that the Sabbath is spent in frolicking and gambling. What I have suffered in body and mind my pen is not able to communicate to you; but this I can say, while my body is wet with water, and chilled with cold, my soul is filled with heavenly fire. Glory to God and the Lamb! I have not a wish but that the will of God may be done in me, through me, and by me. And I can now say, with St. Paul, that 'I count not my life dear unto me, so that I may save some.' I am now more than one thousand miles from you, and know not that I shall ever see you again; but I hope to meet you one day in the land of rest."

Such was the spirit of these pioneer evangelists of the West. Bowman could not be driven from those morally desolate regions. He kept his ground two years, formed a circuit, and in the second year was

joined by an equally heroic missionary, Thomas Lasley.

In 1807 Jacob Young, whose extraordinary ministerial achievements have already often claimed our attention and wonder, was present with Asbury and other itinerants at the house of Tiffin, Chillicothe, Ohio, attending the Western Conference. Asbury took him into an apartment, aside, read to him Jacob's journey from his father's house to Padan-aram, pausing where the patriarch stopped to rest at night, with a stone for a pillow. Rising, the bishop placed his hands on the head of the young itinerant, and commissioned him to go down the Mississippi, and take charge of the Natchez District. "Go," he said, "in the name of the Lord, do your duty, and God will be with you." Then turning away, he left Young alone, startled at the order, and said no more to him on the subject till the adjournment of the session, when he "read off the appointments," announcing "Mississippi District, Jacob Young." Five circuits, with as many preachers, were assigned him. After the doxology and benediction Young proclaimed to his little band that they would rendezvous at "Cage's Bend, on Cumberland River, Tennessee." M'Kendree conducted him on his way. They reached the house of Dr. Hynes, (famous in the local annals of Methodism in Kentucky,) in Clarke County, Ky. There, after writing him instructions for his work, M'Kendree "knelt down and commended me," writes Young, "to God in solemn prayer. Dr. Hynes shouted aloud, his pious lady praised the Lord; the pious Martha wept bitterly. My fine Arabian horse being brought to the gate, I took my saddle-bags on my arm, and gave my friends the parting hand. Martha followed to the gate, and gave me a vest pattern and a silver dollar. I

mounted, and rode away, traveling nearly two hundred miles alone. The vows of the Almighty were upon me. My field of labor was large, in a strange country, far from home. In due time I came to the place of rendezvous. The preachers met me according to appointment, and we spent two or three days making preparations to pass through the wilderness, from Nashville to Natchez, which was then considered a dangerous road, often infested by robbers. We bought a pack-horse and saddle, and other things necessary for a long journey. Here we held a three days' meeting, which was attended with much good. From this place we rode to Liberty Hill, between Nashville and Franklin, where we met with James Ward, presiding elder of the district, and Joseph Oglesby, circuit preacher in charge. Here we had an excellent camp-meeting. We then rode to the town of Franklin, put up with Major Murry and Lewis Garret, where we laid in our stores for the wilderness. The first day we rode about thirty miles. About sundown we halted, and tied our horses to the trees. One of our company being still behind, came up while we were cooking supper. We had our camp-kettle, every man had his own knife, and we made wooden forks."

Thus they journeyed on, forty or fifty miles a day, through Indian tribes—the Chickasaws and Choctaws—and all kinds of frontier hardships. Arriving at Fort Gibson, they pitched their tent "on the Common," and soon after met Blackman, Bowman, and Lasley, the only three preachers of the country. These were about to return; but with Young were Richard Browning, John Travis, Zedekiah M'Minn, James Axley, (a host in himself,) and Anthony Houston. In two days the new itinerants had dispersed to their hard work.

About two years Young continued to travel this great district, through scenes of wild life the most incredible, often swimming rivers, losing himself in woods and swamps, making his way by Indian trails, lodging in filthy cabins, and encountering at many of his appointments the most godless, reckless, hardy, and degraded population of the whole American frontier; many of them men of high crimes, who had escaped thither from the retributions of justice in older settlements. Lorenzo Dow, in his eccentric wanderings, reached these regions, and for some time co-operated strenuously with the pioneers. Though a New England man, Young found him as competent as any of his itinerants for frontier service, and bore him along over his immense district, both of them preaching night and day to rude, half-civilized throngs in the forests. Axley's field was the Catahoolah and Washita[8] Circuits, where he labored mightily, and was in great favor with many of the rudest settlers, though fiercely persecuted by others. He was "out of money," says Young, "and his clothing very ragged; we made him up some money to buy him some clothes, and sent it to him, but he paid the money out for flooring-boards. He then went into the forest, and cut down pine-trees, and hewed them with his own hands; next, borrowed a yoke of oxen, and hauled them together; finally, he called the neighbors to raise the house, which he covered with shingles, made with his own hands. He built his pulpit, cut out his doors and windows, bought him boards, and made seats. He then gave notice that the meeting-house was ready, and if the people would come together he would preach to them. They all flocked out to hear him. He preached several times, then read the General Rules,

[8] Young so represents it. The Minutes say Opelousas.

and told them if they would conform to those rules he would take them into the Methodist Church. But he warned them faithfully, if they did not intend to conform, not to join. The first day he opened the church door eighteen joined. Axley informed me almost every week how he was succeeding. A friend wrote me a letter informing me that the chapel was finished, and he had named it Axley Chapel; that Axley had conducted himself with so much propriety, that neither man nor devils could find any fault with him." Axley thus built with his own hands the first Methodist Church in Louisiana.

After toiling there alone many months "our beloved Brother Axley returned," says Young, "from Louisiana to the Mississippi territory. He met us at William Foster's. When he went to Louisiana he was a large, fine-looking man; but his flesh had since fallen off, and he looked quite diminutive. His clothes were worn out, and when he saw his brethren he could not talk for weeping. The people soon clothed him, his health became restored, his spirits revived, and he came to our camp-ground in pretty good order." His fellow-laborers also suffered much. Travis was prostrated with typhoid fever, and had to be left on the route homeward to the North.

John M'Clure succeeded Young, and had charge of the district two years, when (1810)[9] Miles Harper took command of it for one year, with a reinforcement of preachers, enlarging the little corps to ten. It was now that its most eminent evangelist, and one of the most notable men of the American ministry, William Winans, appeared there. He was born, in 1788, among the rudest

[9] But his appointment does not appear in the Minutes till 1811. All the early western appointments antedate that publication one year.

population of Western Pennsylvania, "on the top of the Alleghanies, near Braddock's Grave."[10] He was left an orphan when only two years old; but his mother was a woman of rare capacity and piety, and taught him to read in their home in the mountain woods, where he became a diligent student of their only two books, the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress. In his sixteenth year he moved, with his courageous mother, to Clermont County, Ohio. When about eighteen years old he received "thirteen and a half days'" instruction at school, the only academic education of his life. He had heard Valentine Cook, and other celebrated itinerants, who had preached in his mother's cabin, and through most of his early life was addicted to religious reflection. In 1808 he was licensed to preach, and sent to Limestone Circuit, Ky. The next year he was thrown into Indiana, to the famous Vincennes Circuit, which included "all the settlements on the Wabash and White Rivers from the Indian line to the Ohio River." It was there that he acquired the lifelong friendship of General Harrison, (afterward President,) with whom he was associated in Indian perils, and who has left an eloquent estimate of the services of Methodist preachers to the West. "Confer," wrote Harrison, when president, to one of his political associates, "confer with my old friend William Winans; he is one of the best and wisest men known to me."[11]

The conference held at Shelbyville, Ky., in 1810, dispatched him to the Southern Mississippi, where he traveled the Claiborne Circuit. At that session Asbury wrote: "We have an open door set wide to us in Mis-

[10] Letter from his friend, Colonel G. F. W. Claiborne, of Mississippi, to the author.

[11] Letter of President Harrison to Colonel Claiborne.

sissippi; the preachers there sent but one messenger to conference, they could not spare more; they keep their ground like soldiers of Christ, and men of God." Winans made his way thither through the Indian and other dangers of the wilderness route, like Gibson, Blackman, Young, and their associates, and at once proved himself the right man for the peculiar exigencies of the country. None of his predecessors had borne to it more gigantic energies of mind or body. The bare catalogue of his appointments shows the devotion with which he labored through a long life for its religious improvement, persisting in spite of untold trials, and at last fearful struggles with disease: "Claiborne Circuit, Wilkinson, Natchez and Claiborne, two years; New Orleans, 1813–14; Natchez and Claiborne, Wilkinson; local five years, on account of ill health; Natchez Circuit, 1821; Mississippi District, four years; Washington Station; Washington District, three years; missionary agent three years; superannuated, 1833; New Orleans District; Wilkinson, supernumerary; Woodville Station; agent for New Orleans Church, 1837; New Orleans District; Natchez, four years; New Orleans District, three years; agent for Centenary College, 1846; Natchez District, two years; Woodville Station; agent for Centenary College; superannuated four years; a delegate to General Conference nine times, and a delegate to the convention which organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, embracing a period of forty-five years." "And during this long term," continues our authority, "he never sought inglorious ease; he never grew weary of well-doing, he never became selfish and worldly. With persevering and undaunted spirit he labored on. The generation that witnessed his coming, and most of his colleagues, went down to the grave; and still

his enthusiasm, and energy, and masculine intellect survived, and his spirit glowed like some eternal flame upon the altar of a ruined temple. Often have I seen him, on his tours of circuit duty, scarcely able to sit in the saddle; dragging himself into the pulpit, preach for two hours with surpassing power and unction, and then fall down, faint and exhausted, his handkerchief stained with blood, and, for days thereafter, motionless, hovering, as it were, between life and death. Thirty years ago, and at intervals since, he was thought to be in a rapid decline; he was afflicted with hemorrhages, bronchitis, derangement of the vital organs, and general debility, and physicians prohibited the excitement of the pulpit. But he would preach; he felt called of God to preach. And what changes he witnessed! In 1810 the work of the Mississippi preachers extended over what is now the territory of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Conferences. There were but ten itinerants in this great field of labor, and the whole number of Church members five hundred and nine. Now, in these conference bounds there are more than three hundred itinerants, and between eighty and ninety thousand Church members! The number of preachers has increased thirty-fold, the Church members upward of one hundred and sixty-fold! Nor is this all. The Mississippi Conference has contributed largely to the Memphis, Arkansas, Florida, and the Texan conferences, and somewhat to the California Conference. It has likewise sent forth missionaries to heathen lands; contributed nobly to the dissemination of the Scriptures, and has endowed schools and public journals, seminaries and colleges. In this great work William Winans has been, under Providence, mainly instrumental."[12]

[12] Col. Claiborne.

William Winans became the most representative character of Southwestern Methodism. His last appearance in the North was at the memorable General Conference of 1844 in New York, where the secession of the Southern Church, on account of slavery, was initiated He took a chief part in that controversy, for he had himself become a slaveholder, under the plea of domestic necessity. He was then, next to Peter Cartwright, the most unique man in the assembly; tall, thin, weather-worn, and looking the very image of a frontier settler who had worn himself lean by the labors of the field and the hunts of the woods. He wore no stock or neckerchief, his shirt collar lay slouchingly about his neck, and his whole attire had the appearance of habitual neglect. And yet this rough backwoodsman was a doctor of divinity, and a voracious reader of light and polished literature, carrying around his district saddle-bags crammed with the works of the most popular writers. In discourse he was most intensely earnest, the tight features of his face became flushed and writhed with his emotions, his eye gleamed, and his voice (strong but harsh) thrilled with a stentorian energy and overwhelming effect. In contrast with these traits (unrelieved as they were by a single exterior attraction) was a mind of astonishing power, comprehensive, all grasping, reaching down to the foundations and around the whole circuit of its positions; not touching subjects, but seizing them as with the claws of an eagle. He threw himself on his opponent as an anaconda on its prey, circling and crushing it. It was a rare curiosity to critical observers to witness this rude, forbidding-looking man exhibiting in debate such a contrast of intellectual and physical traits. His style was excellent, showing an acquaintance with the standard models, and his scien-

tific allusions proved him well read if not studied in general knowledge. With the secession of the South and the consequent civil war, much of the great work he had done in Mississippi and Louisiana was undone; but after the restoration of peace its germs were still found vital in the soil, and promise again to cover those extended regions with evangelical harvests.

Of most of the colaborers of these chief itinerants of the southwest hardly any records remain. What intimations, however, we occasionally find respecting them show that they were generally remarkable men. "The earliest recollections I have of Methodism," writes a distinguished citizen of Mississippi, "begins with an old brick meeting-house in the village of Washington, six miles east of Natchez. It was built mainly by the efforts of Randall Gibson, who had removed to the Mississippi Territory, then in the hands of the Spaniards, about the close of the revolutionary war.[13] He settled in the neighborhood of Natchez, subsequently moved to Jefferson and Claiborne counties, but during the last years of his life resided in Warren, where he died, at an advanced age, leaving a numerous family, all, I believe, in connection with the Church. His connections and descendants, consisting of the Gibsons, Fosters, Newmans, Lums, Gillespies, Smiths, Collins, Harrisons, etc., are scattered all over Mississippi and Louisiana, and have for half a century been the props of Methodism in these two states. He was an apostolic-looking man, realizing my idea of St. John the Baptist, and was remarkable for his singular mildness, his persuasive powers, good sense, and perseverance. In that old meeting-house I heard, when a child, the celebrated Lo

[13] Before Tobias Gibson went to the southwest some of his kindred had settled about Natchez. Randall Gibson was his brother.

renzo Dow, who preached then, punctually to the minute, in pursuance of an appointment he had made some five or six years previous. On that previous visit he had contributed one hundred dollars to the building of the meeting-house. The first camp-meeting I ever attended was in the Foster settlement, Adams County, and the preachers whom I remember are, Randall Gibson, Miles Harper, Thomas Griffin, and William Winans. The latter was then recently from Indiana; a tall, thin, raw-boned and awkward young man, arrayed in home-spun pants, with a long, brown, straight-breasted coat, no neckerchief, and a coarse pair of boots. There was nothing prepossessing about him but his small, burning eyes, that glowed like coals of fire. His manner was slow, deliberative, self-possessed; but the first sentence he uttered arrested the attention of the audience, and told that he was no ordinary man. Miles Harper and Thomas Griffin were brothers-in-law, having married daughters of one of the patriarchs of the Church. They were both then young men, and used to 'hunt in couples,' as often as circuit duties permitted, and it was seldom they failed to 'tree their game.' I often heard them during a period of twenty years, and as camp-meeting and revival preachers I have never met their superiors. They were both men of striking physiognomy, of rough manners and severe aspect, and full of pungent, and sometimes very bitter satire. They had clear, powerful, stentorian voices, whose loudest tones would ring through the forest with terrible distinctness, and whose lowest notes were perfectly audible. Harper's voice was peculiarly remarkable, full of volume and melody. He had a sparkling eye; a smile, when he chose to smile, particularly persuasive; and a fund of anecdote at command, which he brought to bear with

great effect. Griffin was rather harsh and sardonic. He would make the congregation quail, and shrink, and hide their heads with fear and shame, and then Harper would solace and comfort them; and between the two, whenever they preached, a revival was sure to follow. Both these good men began life with no advantages of education; they were pioneer Methodists, saddle-bag preachers, the great instruments of civilization and Christianity. In the wilderness, by the torch of the camp-fire, on the circuit exposed to toil, privation, and personal peril, they studied the Bible; and I doubt if any ever understood it better, or preached it with more effect. Harper died, not many years since, in the parish of Tensas, Louisiana, leaving there several sons, who inherit his talents and virtues."

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CHAPTER XI.

METHODISM IN THE WEST, CONCLUDED: 1804–1820.

Richmond Nolley and his Band of Pioneers set out for the Southwest — Lewis Hobbs and Thomas Griffin — Death of Hobbs — Nolley's Extraordinary Labors — Anecdote — Makes his Way into the Interior of Louisiana — Perishes in the Woods — Daniel De Vinne in Louisiana — Mississippi Conference Organized — Judge Lane — Dr. Kennon — Joseph Travis — Other Itinerants — Asbury in the West — His Opinion of Camp-meetings — His great Interest for the West — His Career closes — Great Progress of Western Methodism — Its Antislavery Character — Ecclesiastical Action on Slavery — Camp-meeting Excesses — The "Jerks" — Death of William Lostpeich — Of George Askin — Of Hezekiah Harriman — Aboriginal Missions begun — John Stewart, a Negro, the first Missionary — His Singular History and Success — Mary Stubbs — Outspread of Missions.

THE extraordinary history of Richmond Nolley has heretofore been sketched down to his departure from South Carolina for the southwest, whither he was sent, with Lewis Hobbs, Drury Powell, and Thomas Griffin, in 1812. They set out together on horseback, and journeyed through the forests and Indian tribes three hundred and fifty miles, "swimming deep creeks, and camping out eleven nights,"[1] till they arrived at Nolley's appointment, the Tombigbee Mission. Alas, that we have no journal of that tour, and but incoherent references to any of these standard-bearers of the Church in the wilderness! I have heretofore cited a few allusions to some of them. "Hobbs," says one of our authorities, "was a lovely spirit. He was called the 'weeping

[1] Bishop M'Tyeire's Sketch of Nolley, in "Biographical Sketches," p. 264.

prophet.' He shed tears over sinners while he warned them. A year or two afterward he was stationed in New Orleans, where his last strength was spent. Their appointments scattered them widely. Griffin's was on the Ouachita. Few have been so honored in planting Methodism in the southwest. He lived to a good old age, and his memory is blessed by thousands. While Nolley persuaded sinners, and Hobbs wept over them, Griffin made them quail. There was a clear, metallic ring in his nature. By the camp-fire, on the forest-path, he studied. One of the saddle-bags men — to whom western civilization is more indebted than to any other class of agents — he mastered the hardy elements of frontier life; he was sagacious in judgment, decisive in action, strong in speech, and generous-hearted."[2]

The "old Minutes" remark (in 1815) of Hobbs: "Truly, it may be said that he counted not his life dear to him so he might be instrumental in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom; for, although he was of a slender habit, he cheerfully submitted to the inconveniences of a missionary station, and the almost incredible difficulties he had to surmount in New Orleans, where he became deeply consumptive. In a lingering and dying condition he traveled nearly one thousand miles, (great part of which lay through an almost uninhabited wilderness,) to his native country, where he departed this life on the fourth of September, 1814, in full assurance of endless life. He was for some time a witness of that love which casteth out all slavish fear. 'I am going, but not a missionary; I am going to Jesus!' he exclaimed on his death-bed. 'When I entered the connection I gave myself to the Lord and the connection. I now feel no sorrow for having filled the stations to

[2] Biographical Sketches, p. 266.

which I was appointed, but a peculiar consolation that I have preached the gospel to a people who till then had been strangers to it.'"

Astonishing, superhuman almost, as seem the travels and labors of many of the earlier itinerants, none of them could have surpassed the adventurous energy of Nolley on his Tombigbee Circuit, among the rudest settlements and Indian perils. For two years he ranged over a vast extent of country, preaching continually, stopping for no obstructions of flood or weather. When his horse could not go on he shouldered his saddle-bags and pressed forward on foot. He took special care of the children, growing up in a half savage condition, over all the country, and catechized and instructed them with the utmost diligence, as the best means of averting barbarism from the settlements. To his successor on the circuit he gave a list of them by name, solemnly charging him, "be sure to look after these children." He labored night and day also for the evangelization of the blacks.[3] When Indian hostilities prevailed, the settlers crowded into isolated forts and stockades. Nolley sought no shelter, but hastened from post to post, instructing and comforting the alarmed refugees. He kept "the gospel sounding abroad through all the country," says our authority. The people could not but love him, admiring and wondering at his courage; and the very savages seemed to hear a voice saying unto them, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." It was in this wild country that happened the fact, often cited as an illustration of the

[3] Methodist preachers generally in the South, in these early days, instructed the negroes at night, as the latter were kept hard at work during the day. Many of them perished by this toil, superadded to their daily preaching to the whites.

energy of the primitive Methodist ministry. "The informant, Thomas Clinton," says a southern bishop, "subsequently labored in that region, and, though a generation has passed, he is not forgotten there. In making the rounds of his work Nolley came to a fresh wagon-track. On the search for anything that had a soul, he followed it, and came upon the emigrant family just as it had pitched on the ground of its future home. The man was unlimbering his team, and the wife was busy around the fire. 'What!' exclaimed the settler upon hearing the salutation of the visitor, and taking a glance at his unmistakable appearance, 'have you found me already? Another Methodist preacher! I left Virginia to get out of reach of them, went to a new settlement in Georgia, and thought to have a long whet, but they got my wife and daughter into the Church; then, in this late purchase, (Choctaw Corner,) I found a piece of good land, and was sure I would have some peace of the preachers, and here is one before my wagon is unloaded.' Nolley gave him small comfort. 'My friend, if you go to heaven you'll find Methodist preachers there; and if to hell, I am afraid you will find some there; and you see how it is in this world, so you had better make terms with us, and be at peace.'"[4]

By 1814 he had made his way into Louisiana to the renowned Opelousas and Attakapas Circuit, which lay far in the interior of that state, half way of the distance from New Orleans to Texas, and extended from the Red River to the Gulf. Wonderful things are still told of his labors on Bayou Teche, the O'Tash River of Bowman's letter, heretofore quoted. He had great success on the circuit, and no little persecution. As an example of the treatment he had to endure from a class

[4] Bishop M'Tyeire.

of the rude population, it is said that a sugar planter drove him away from his smoke-stack, where he had gone to ask the privilege of warming himself. On one occasion, when he was preaching, some lewd fellows of the baser sort took him forcibly from the stand, and were on their way to the bayou to duck him; but a negro woman, armed with a hoe, effected his rescue; and, having assisted the exhausted preacher back to the house, and put him in the stand, said triumphantly, "There now, preach."[5]

He appeared in the next Conference an attenuated, worn-out man, yet it was deemed necessary to send him back to the same rugged field. "He went," says his presiding elder, "without a murmur." He was accompanied on his return by Griffin. They crossed the Mississippi and a vast swamp. "The difficulties we had to encounter," says Griffin, "were almost incredible." Coming to a place where they must separate, after embracing each other, with mutual benedictions they parted. It was in the latter part of November, and a dark, cold, rainy day. Arriving at night at the house of a friendly man, where he stayed till morning, imparting the comforts of religion to its inmates, Nolley resumed his journey. Across his path there lay a large swamp and deep creeks, and not a single white man was to be found between him and the place of his destination. Alone he traveled on till evening, when he found himself at an Indian village. "Having to cross a creek before night, and apprehending from the rains that it would be swollen, he employed an Indian to go with him. When he arrived on its banks he found it, as he anticipated, a full and angry flood, rushing tumultuously along. There was no alternative but to cross, or remain with the sav-

[5] Sprague, p. 441.

ages, so he chose the former; and, leaving his valise, saddle-bags, and a parcel of books with the Indian, he urged his horse into the stream. No sooner did his charger strike the current than he was beaten down the flood. The animal battled courageously with the stream, but before the other shore was reached, horse and rider were far below the landing-place of the ford, and, the banks being high, it was impossible for the horse to gain a foothold, or make the ascent of the other shore. In the struggle to do so the rider was thrown, and, grasping the limb of a tree which extended over the stream, he reached the shore. The horse swam back to the side of the stream whence he had started. The missionary directed the Indian to keep his horse till morning, and he would walk to the nearest house, which was distant about two miles. He traveled through the woods about one mile, wet, cold, and weary. Unable to proceed any further, and conscious perhaps that his work was done, and that he had at last fulfilled the errand of his Master, he fell upon his knees, and commended his soul to God. There, in that wild wood of the far West, alone with his God and the ministering spirits that encamp around the saints, Richard Nolley, the young missionary, closed his eyes on earth to open them in heaven. When he was found he was lying extended upon the wet leaves, his left hand upon his breast, and the other lying by his side. His eyes were closed, and the gentle spirit left a smile upon his pallid cheek ere it passed away to that bright and beautiful world, where the wicked cease to trouble, and the weary are at rest."[6]

The day of his death was Friday, his fast day. He was probably weaker than usual, and his feeble health

[6] Minutes of 1816, and Finley's "Autobiography," p. 342.

and fatiguing travels, together with the unusual coldness of the weather, were more than he could bear. His knees were muddy, and there were prints of them in the ground, showing that he had been praying in this last scene of his mortal life. He had evidently resigned himself calmly to his fate, selecting a place to die on, beneath a clump of pines, composing his limbs and closing his eyes. A traveler found him the next day. He was borne to the nearest house, and on Sunday was buried "in Catahoula Parish, near the road leading from Alexandria to Harrisonburg, and about twenty miles from the latter place. In 1856 three members of the Conference sought out the long-neglected and almost forgotten spot, marked it, and, kneeling down, consecrated themselves afresh to the same ministry of faith and patience and love. These forty years the recollection of Nolley has quickened the zeal of his brethren. From that mound of earth, in the fenceless old field, a voice has spoken, 'Be faithful.' In the minds of the people the effect was profound." [7]

He was but thirty years old, tall, slender, emaciated by labors and fastings; had dark, radiant eyes, and a countenance full of determination and saintliness; was never married; "was always busy, rising at four o'clock at all times and places;" was a man of no extraordinary intellectual powers, but of extraordinary courage, self-denial, and labor, and yet achieved more perhaps by his death than by his life, for his name is consecrated in the heart of the Church as that of a martyr, and he is still spoken of "through the interior of Louisiana" as "a man of the rarest qualities, and especially as one of the most eminent saints." [8]

[7] Bishop M'Tyeire.

[8] Ebenezer Hearn, (one of his successors there,) in Sprague, p. 443.

Many other itinerants, worthy of commemoration, venerated in the local traditions of the Church, but with hardly other record than the vague allusions of the Minutes, were added year after year to the pioneer band. Not a few were raised up in the new field itself, and some were even sent to the older sections of the denomination. It can hardly fail to surprise northern Methodists to observe in the Minutes, attached to the old Opelousas or Attakapas Circuit, in the heart of Louisiana, the name of Daniel De Vinne, a laborer still abroad and vigorous, in the New York East Conference, though nearly half a century has passed since he followed the tracks of Axley and Nolley in this wild region. Born in Ireland in 1793, he was brought by his parents to America when not a year old, and became a Methodist in Albany in 1810. He caught the spirit of the itinerancy of that day, and longed for missionary work. In 1818 he joined an association, formed in New York by Joshua Soule, for the support of Mark Moore, of Baltimore, as a Methodist missionary in New Orleans; a society which was the germ of the Missionary Society of the Church, organized a few months later. The same year he went to Louisiana, and began a Sunday-school for slaves, which was soon dispersed by opposition. He ascended the river, and labored on the Natchez Circuit; was received into the Conference of 1819, and sent to the Opelousas Circuit, where he traveled two years, encountering the severest hardships; preaching every day, except Monday, to the whites, and every night to the slaves, besides leading classes, and traveling from thirty to forty miles a day over prairies without roads or bridges; fording the bayous, or, when they were high, swimming them, or passing over by floats of dec. yed logs, tied together by grape-

vines. A hearty hater of slavery, he devoted himself with much zeal to the religious welfare of its victims, and they were his most ardent friends.[9] His circuit was a range of five hundred and sixty-four miles, from Alexandria, on Red River, to the Gulf. His salary the first year, "after paying ferriage and horse-shoeing," was less than thirteen dollars; the second year "it advanced prodigiously to sixty-seven dollars." For some years he did faithful service in various parts of this grand field, and returned to the North only when it began to be amply supplied by ministerial recruits from its own Churches, or adjacent Conferences.

In 1817 appears in the Minutes, for the first time, the title of the "Mississippi Conference," ordered by the General Conference of 1816. It was organized at the house of William Foster, at Pine Ridge, Adams County, about seven miles above Natchez, Bishop Roberts presiding. A southern authority, writing in 1858, says: "The little company of pioneers then assembled were a feeble band, nine in number, all told. They had to provide for the spiritual wants of the people, so far as Methodism was concerned, from the Chattahoochee to the Tennessee River, and from the Cherokee nation east to the Sabine River west. The little company all slept under the same roof, and ate at the same hospitable table. The cottage—for now it seems quite diminutive—still stands, almost unchanged. It is worthy of remark that four of that little band, at the end of forty-one years, still survive. Five have finished their course with joy. Those who have gone to their reward are

[9] "Having preached my last sermon in St. Mary's court-house, La., on leaving I observed a stir among the slaves: they were making up a donation for me. It was gracefully presented, and amounted to fifty cents. Small as it was, it has never been forgotten."—Letter to the Author.

Thomas Griffin, John Menifee, John Lane, Ashley Hewitt, and Alexander Fleming. The survivors are Peter James, Elisha Lott, Thomas Nixon, and Elijah Gentry. Dr. Winans was local at that time, but present, and assisting at the Conference. One was received on trial, Thomas Owens, the first recruit in the territory. In looking over the region to be supplied by this little band we are constrained to exclaim, What hath God wrought! They went out with their staff, but now they are more than three bands. From this nucleus have sprung the Alabama, Louisiana, two Texas Conferences, and a part of the Memphis Conference." [10]

It had now two districts, Mississippi and Louisiana, nine circuits, twelve preachers, and one thousand nine hundred and forty-one members. By 1820 it reported three districts, all with state titles—Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama—comprising the state of Louisiana south of the Arkansas, all the Mississippi territory south of the Tennessee River, and stretching over the present states of Mississippi and Alabama. It had yet

[10] Rev. Dr. Drake, "Biographical Sketches," etc., p. 238. It should be stated, however, that the Conference was, *de facto*, formed as early as 1813. The General Conference of 1812 authorized its organization "whenever it should seem expedient;" and as, during the war, from 1812 to 1815, the preachers could not pass through the Indian country to the Tennessee Conference, they "assembled on the first of November, 1813, at the residence of Newit Trick, a local preacher, living near Spring Hill Church, in Jefferson County, Mississippi, and organized themselves into a quasi Conference. This first informal Conference was composed of Samuel Sellers, Miles Harper, Lewis Hobbs, Thomas Griffin, John S. Ford, William Winans, Richmond Nolley, and John Shrock. William Winans was elected secretary, and the business was conducted in regular order. Three other similar sessions were held without a bishop, at which they received and elected preachers to orders, passed upon each other's character, collected their statistics, planned their work, assigned the preachers to their fields of labor, and then sent their minutes to the Tennessee Conference for approval, in order to their incorporation in the general Minutes."—Rev. J. G Jones, in New Orleans Christian Advocate.
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but eleven "appointments" and seventeen preachers, but most of its circuits were four or five hundred miles around, and the itinerants preached daily. Many mighty men were subsequently in their ranks, and influential local or "located" preachers co-operated with them extensively. Methodism here, as elsewhere in the West, was rapidly appropriating the country.

To the numerous list of important itinerants, thus far noticed, in this great ultramontane field, scores, not to say hundreds, of similar characters might be added, such as John Lane, (generally known as Judge Lane,) a man of "noble form and captivating manners," and who, after years of ministerial travel, broke down, located, and, marrying into the family of the Vicks, became one of the proprietors of Vicksburgh, a wealthy and most influential citizen and public functionary, and always used his eminent advantages for the promotion of religion. He re entered the itinerancy in 1822, and died in it 1855, exclaiming, "I am ready! I have been living for this all my lifetime!"[11] Dr. Robert L. Kennon, after laboring some years in South Carolina and Georgia, settled in Alabama, and became one of its most eminent citizens and representative Methodists, and, re entering the itinerancy, died in it while attending the Conference of 1837, "a preacher," says a southern bishop, "of very high order."[12] Joseph Travis, after traveling thirty years in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, passed to the southwest, and continued his useful ministry in the Mississippi Conference. Thomas L. Douglass, of North Carolina, after preaching about fourteen years with distinguished success in the Virginia Conference, was transferred, in

[11] Rev. Dr. Drake, Annals of South. Meth., 1856, p. 265.
[12] Bishop Andrew in Sprague, p. 121.

1809, to Tennessee, where he was "the instrument of the conversion of hundreds and thousands of souls;" [13] a man of great dignity and amenity, a genuine Christian gentleman, and a rare pulpit orator. He died in 1843. And, as we pass again northward, we meet, in the Minutes, with the names of Joseph Oglesby, Charles Holliday, Jonathan Stamper, La Roy Cole, John F. Wright, John Crane, James Gwin, Alexander Cummins, Marcus Lindsey, William R. Raper, William W. Redman, John A. Waterman, Allen Wiley, William Gunn, and scores of others, equally noteworthy, who were identified with western Methodist history, more or less, during these years, and the events of whose individual lives in the ministry would make romantic volumes.

These powerful men were under the episcopal guidance of Asbury and M'Kendree; leaders worthy to command such a host.[14] Asbury made through all these years, down to within four or five months of his death, his annual visit to the West; but, as now in all other parts of the country, his records give us hardly any available facts. He still endured there many hardships, especially in crossing the mountains; but the flood of emigration had borne along hundreds of excellent Methodist families, with whom he had been familiar in the East, and who hailed his coming in the wilderness, often with tears, sometimes with the wildest delight. "Thus," he wrote there in 1805, "our people are scattered abroad; but, thank the Lord! they are still in the fold, and on their way to glory." In Kentucky, the same year, he writes, "We meet crowds directing

[13] Rev. Dr. M'Ferrin, in Sprague, p. 211.

[14] Roberts had hardly yet begun his episcopal travels in the West, his first duties being in the East.

their march to the fertile West. Their sufferings for the present are great; but they are going to present abundance and future wealth for their children. In ten years, I think, the new state will be one of the most flourishing in the Union." He says, in this visit, "Sure I am that nothing short of the welfare of immortal souls and my sense of duty could be inducement enough for me to visit the West so often. O the roads, the hills, the rocks, the rivers, the want of water even to drink; the time for secret prayer hardly to be stolen, and the place scarcely to be had! My mind, nevertheless, has been kept in peace."

He rejoiced at the introduction of the camp-meeting, as peculiarly suited to the wants of these new regions. It gave him immense congregations, and added the people to the Church by thousands. In 1809 he says "it appears that the bishops will hold one in every district;" but the presiding elders held many more. The same year there were seventeen on Miami District, as many on that of Indiana, and almost every district had two or more. At one of them the bishop wrote, "I cannot say how I felt, nor how near heaven. I must take the field!" Again he exclaims, "I pray God that there may be twenty camp-meetings a week, and wonderful seasons of the Lord in all directions." "More of camp-meetings!" he again writes; "I hear and see the great effects produced by them." In his last western tour (1815) he says: "My soul is blessed with continual consolation and peace in all my great weakness of body, labor, and crowds of company. I am a debtor to the whole continent, but more especially to the northeast and southwest. It is there I usually gain health, and generally lose it in the south and center. I have visited the South thirty times in thirty-one years. I wish to

visit Mississippi, but am resigned." He was too feeble in health to go thither, but would have gone had not the preachers at the Conference, who knew the sickliness of the Southern Mississippi, had the kindness and self-denial to remonstrate against his purpose. In September of this year, while at Cincinnati, he had "a long and earnest talk" with M'Kendree "about the affairs of the Church" and his own prospects. "I told him," he adds, "that the western part of the empire would be the glory of America for the poor and pious; that it ought to be marked out for five Conferences, to wit: Ohio, Kentucky, Holston, Mississippi, and Missouri; in doing which, as well as I was able, I traced out lines and boundaries. I told him that having passed the first allotted period, (seventy years,) and being, as he knew, out of health, it could not be expected I could visit the extremities every year, sitting in eight, it might be twelve, Conferences, and traveling six thousand miles in eight months." He feels the approaches of his "great change," but offers to travel and work on, as he might have ability. The news of Coke's death reminds him impressively that he too must soon depart; and in the next month, while attending the Conference, he perceives distinctly that his work is about done, and resigns himself without sadness to his fate. "I ordained the deacons," he writes, "and preached a sermon, in which Dr. Coke was remembered. My eyes fail. I will resign the stations to Bishop M'Kendree, I will take away my feet." He reviews, but with a glance, the past, and turns his look still forward with joy. "It is my fifty-fifth year of ministry, and forty-fifth year of labor in America. My mind enjoys great peace and divine consolation. Whether health, life, or death, good is the will of the Lord. I 'will trust

him; yea, and will praise him: he is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.' Glory! glory! glory!"

He journeyed on, still preaching almost daily, but failing fast, till at last, resolved to die in the field of his long and glorious warfare, he had to be carried into the pulpit, and, in about five months after this entry in his journal, was borne in the arms of his traveling companion from the last one he occupied, when "unable either to walk or stand," and in seven days "ceased at once to work and live."

With such men, led by such commanders, we are not surprised that western Methodism triumphed all over the settled regions of the Mississippi Valley; that the one Western Conference with which we began this period had increased to five by its close, each of them bearing the names of now mighty states—Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and Mississippi—that its six presiding elders' districts were now twenty-seven, many of them individually comprehending the territory of a modern Conference; that its thirty-nine circuits were now two hundred, striking the waters of the great lakes on the north, and of the Gulf of Mexico on the south, winding among the Alleghany fastnesses on the East, and threading the Indian trails to the farthest log-cabins on the West; and that its seventy-two preachers had increased to three hundred and forty, and its communicants from fifteen thousand three hundred and fifteen to ninety-eight thousand six hundred and forty-two.[14] Largely more than one third of both the ministry and membership of American Methodism was now within

[14] I must remind the reader that I follow not the geography of the Church, but the natural geography of the country, in these as in all other estimates.

the Valley of the Mississippi. Western Methodism had now also its Book Concern at Cincinnati, with Martin Ruter, from New England, at its head.

It was a powerful "temperance" organization, battling with the most menacing vice of that new country. It was also decidedly and practically an antislavery society. I have cited some of its antislavery records; one of these documents (the original manuscript of which now lies under my eye) is the "Address from the Quarterly Meeting Conference, in Livingston Circuit, Kentucky, to the Bishops and Members of the Western Conference," 1806, signed by M'Kendree and James T. White. It reads like a modern "radical" production: "Isaiah saith, 'Undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free; break every yoke, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, a spring of water which faileth not; yea, thou shalt be the restorer of the paths to walk in.' This day our official brethren voluntarily submitted all their slaves to the judgment of the Conference, whether bought with their money before or after joining society, given or born in their houses, and we thereby had the unspeakable pleasure of decreeing salvation from slavery in favor of twenty-two immortal souls." It proceeds to state examples. William Code gave up thirteen; Josiah Ramsey "offered up six on the altar of love;" James T. White one, "which was his all." Another case is deferred to the next meeting, and it is added that "when this is done we shall, as far as we know, be free from the stain of blood in our official department. Glory, halleluiah! Praise ye the Lord!" "If it is consistent with your authority, and it seemeth good unto you, we should be glad of liberty to exclude buying and selling [of slaves] from our Church, and to require of all slaveholders who may hereafter become

members of the Church, to submit their slaves to the judgment of the Conference," etc.

Similar memorials were sent from other quarterly Conferences to the Western Conference, and at the session of 1808, held at "Liberty Hill," Tenn., and comprising about fifty preachers, Burke read such petitions from Hinkstone and Limestone Circuits, and also "an Address" to the Annual Conference, "stating the necessity of a rule on the subject of buying and selling slaves, signed by James Gwyn." Collins and Parker moved "that the subject of slavery be considered, and some decisive rule made on that subject." The Conference appointed Sale, Lakin, and Burke to "draft a rule on the subject." Their report was adopted, subjecting to trial in the quarterly Conference, and to expulsion from the Church, any member who should buy or sell a slave, except in a clear case of humanity. Asbury and M'Kendree were both present, and both signed these proceedings, M'Kendree having been elected bishop, a few months previous, by the General Conference.

We trace this determined antislavery sentiment for years in the West. As early as 1805 Sale wrote from Lexington Circuit, Ky.: "My soul still abhors the infernal practice of slavery as much or more than ever. My wife hates the nefarious practice. In this we are congenial in sentiment. Our possessions are in Ohio state, where the air is not contaminated with slavery. I travel this year in Kentucky. A few days past I wrote a bill of emancipation to have six set at liberty. The man promised me to have it recorded as soon as possible. I anticipate the time when God shall deliver his Church from oppression." Such may be said to have been the general sentiment of the western itiner-

ants of these days of primitive purity and power. In 1816 the Tennessee Conference, assembled at Bethlehem, affirmed, "We most sincerely declare that, in our opinion, slavery is a moral evil." It regretted the civil laws which restricted its ability to act against the evil, "and remove the curse from the Church of God," and passed resolutions against it. At its preceding session it expelled from the Church Joseph Bryant for buying a negro.[15]

The numerical growth of western Methodism in these years would be incredible did we not remember that emigration was now sweeping like an inundation down the western slopes of the Alleghanies, and bearing along thousands of eastern Methodists to the new ultramontane circuits. The camp-meeting, now almost everywhere in vogue, kept nearly all the settled parts of the valley of the Mississippi in religious excitement, and afforded thousands after thousands of additions to the Churches. But these great forest gatherings, apparently supplying a necessity of the country, were at last found to be attended with serious evils. The prolonged and intense excitement which accompanied them produced a singular physical effect, known through the West as the "Jerks." They became epidemic from Michigan to Louisiana. The great "revival," which, beginning in 1800, lasted for some years, and pervaded the entire country, was at last quite generally characterized by this "physical phenomenon." We have seen, by Finley's account, the extraordinary scenes of the "Cane Ridge camp-meeting," where twenty thousand people were gathered, and hundreds smitten to the ground at

[15] See extracts from the "Journal of the Western Conference," by Bishop Morris, in the Western Christian Advocate, January, 1851. The original "Address" of Livingston Circuit belongs to the invaluable collections of Rev. Mr. De Hass, of Washington City, D. C.

one time. In another work[16] I have discussed this curious subject, and suggested its probable scientific solution. I have shown that the "Jerks" were rapid contortions, which seemed always to be the effect, direct or indirect, of religious causes, yet affected not only religious, but often the most irreligious minds. Violent opposers were sometimes seized by them; men with imprecations upon their lips were suddenly smitten with them. Drunkards, attempting to drown the effect by liquors, could not hold the bottle to their lips; their convulsed arms would drop it, or shiver it against the surrounding trees. Horsemen, charging in upon camp-meetings to disperse them, were arrested by the strange affection at the very boundaries of the worshiping circles, sometimes struck from their saddles as if by a flash of lightning, and were the more violently shaken the more they endeavored to resist the inexplicable power. "If they would not strive against it, but pray in good earnest, the jerking would usually abate," says Cartwright, who has seen more than five hundred persons "jerking" at one time in his large congregations. The bonnets, caps, and combs of women would fly off, and so violent were the motions of their heads that "their long hair cracked almost as loudly as a wagoner's whip." Thoughtful men became alarmed at these signs, especially when they saw them spreading over most of the new states and territories. Infidels and scorners could hardly dare to oppose them, for they themselves were often seized by the mysterious affection, while their arguments or jests were but half uttered, and

[16] "History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism," etc., vol. ii, p. 425, where I attempt to explain 'these physical phenomena of religious excitement," and give the opinion of the best Methodist authorities respecting them. Compare also the present work, vol. i, pp. 261, 382, 404.

drunken revilers were smitten by it when alluding to it in their carousals in bar-rooms. Many were the theories proposed for its explanation among Presbyterians and Methodists, by whose joint agency it began. Some supposed it to be a demoniacal effect designed to dis parage religion; others believed it to be a demonstration of the Spirit of God, and promoted it; others pronounced it a morbid physical affection, a species of catalepsy, and no argument for or against religion, but the result of extreme excitement, and therefore justifying more moderate measures; while still others, unable to explain it, believed that, whether in itself good or evil, it was providentially permitted as a means of directing universally the attention of the western population to the consideration of religious subjects. Camp-meetings began, however, to fall into disfavor. For some years there were few if any held in Kentucky; but being still deemed a great convenience for the dispersed population, they were restored with improved order. State legislatures enacted, at the instance of the Methodists, good laws for them, and they have continued to be a sort of American "institution"—summer religious festivals, not only in the West, but in all parts of the nation.

I have already had occasion to notice the deaths of some of the most prominent itinerants of the West. Besides these, the obituary of the Minutes commemorates William Lotspeich, a German, born in Virginia, who, without extraordinary abilities, was a sound, studious, and useful preacher, and, from 1803 to 1813, traveled in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, and died in the latter year, saying, "Tell my old friends all is well, all is well." George Askin, an Irishman, began to travel in 1801, labored successfully in Western Pennsylvania, Western

Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio, and expired in 1816, exclaiming, "My God is mine, and I am his. I have been in the dark mountains, but King Jesus has given me complete victory. Glory be to God!" Hezekiah Harriman, of Baltimore, joined the itinerancy in 1795, labored in Western Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, and Kentucky down to 1803, when he was sent to help Gibson in the Natchez country, and arrived in time to attend him in death. In 1805 Harriman himself was disabled by the climate, and had to embark from New Orleans for Philadelphia. He died on Baltimore Circuit in 1807, "testifying that he had no fear of death."

Toward the end of this period western Methodism, essentially a system of missionary evangelization, became more distinctively missionary, by turning its attention to the aborigines, thereby prompting at last the organization of the Missionary Society of the Church. Remarkably providential events gave it this new direction. While Marcus Lindsey was preaching on a Sabbath, in 1815, in Marietta, Ohio, a negro addicted to drunkenness, and on his way to the river at the time to drown himself, heard the voice of the itinerant, went to the door of the Church, and, after listening to the sermon, returned home with an awakened conscience. On the next Sunday he joined the society, and his neighbors soon saw that he was indeed a regenerated man. He endeavored, in a humble way, to do good, and resolved at last to go among the Indian tribes a witness for the gospel. He could read, and was a superior singer. With his Bible and hymn-book he traveled to the Delawares, on the Muskingum, thence to a tribe near Pipetown, on the Sandusky, thence to another tribe on the Upper Sandusky. In some places he was well received, in others fiercely repelled, and in peril of

martyrdom by the tomahawk; but he usually allayed the violence of the savages by his melodious hymns, or by falling on his knees in prayer, an attitude which the Indians revered with wondering awe. On the Upper Sandusky he found, among the wigwams of the Wyandottes, a captive negro, Jonathan Pointer, who had been taken by them in Virginia when a child, and who could act as his interpreter. His first congregation consisted only of an old Indian man, "Big Tree," and an aged Indian woman, named Mary.[17] But he soon had the whole clan under his influence, and thus went forth, from the first settlement in the Northwestern Territory, the first American Methodist "missionary," John Stewart, and he an African, the founder of that series of aboriginal missions which has since been extended over most of the Indian countries, which has rescued, amid the general decline of the tribes, thousands of immortal souls, and which opened the whole "missionary" career of the denomination.

These extraordinary facts excited no little interest in the western Churches. Assistance was bountifully sent to Stewart and his converts; Jane Trimble especially gave them her sympathies and aid. In 1819 the Ohio Conference adopted the mission, and sent James Montgomery as Stewart's colleague, both being under the presiding eldership of Finley. A school was established by the aid of the national government. Finley, Elliott, Gilruth, Henkle, and many other preachers, labored among the scattered communities of the tribe. Stewart was made a local preacher, and died in the faith in 1823. Converted Wyandottes bore, in 1820, the news of their evangelization to a portion of their tribe, near Fort Malden, in Canada; two Indian preachers went thither

[17] Finley's "Sketches," p. 391.

converts were multiplied, and, twelve years later, there were nine aboriginal missionary stations in Upper Canada, two thousand adult Indians, and four hundred youths were receiving instruction in eleven schools, and the names of John Sunday, Peter Jones, and other native evangelists, became eminent in the Church and in Europe.[15]

The labors of Stewart and his white colleagues continued to prosper greatly. A heroic woman, Harriet Stubbs, sister-in-law of Judge M'Lean, went to their aid as teacher of Indian girls. "She possessed," says Finley, "more courage and fortitude than any one of her age and sex that I have been acquainted with. In a short time the intrepid female missionary was the idol of the whole nation. They looked upon her as an angel-messenger sent from the spirit-land to teach them the way to heaven. They called her the 'pretty red-bird,' and were only happy in the light of her smiles. This most amiable young lady took charge of the Indian girls, and began to teach them their letters, and infuse into them her own sweet and happy spirit." It was not long before five leading chiefs, Big Tree, Between-the-Logs, Mononcue, Hicks, and Peacock, joined the Church. Big Tree was the first convert of his tribe. Between-the-Logs became a powerful preacher; but Mononcue excelled him in the peculiar aboriginal eloquence, and "was," says Finley, "a son of thunder." All these, and hundreds more, after useful lives, died in the faith, but not till they saw Methodist missions established among their people from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. In about three years after Stewart went, solitary and unsupported, on his mission, the "Missionary Society of

[15] Strickland's "History of the Missions of the M. E. Church," p. 73. New York, 1854.

the Methodist Episcopal Church" arose. Its necessity had become obvious. It threw its protecting arms around all the Indian missions, and has since reached them out, with the gospel of peace, to nearly all the ends of the earth.

In re-entering the Valley of the Mississippi, at the beginning of this period, I said that we were descending again the western slope of the Alleghanies to witness marvels hardly paralleled in ecclesiastical history. I have given but the outlines of facts which would fill volumes, yet are they indeed wonders, of character, labor, travel, suffering, and success. And their results, as witnessed in our day, justify the importance here given them. The men who were chief actors in these strange scenes saw in them "signs and wonders," but hardly dared to estimate their full significance; we now see that they were constructing one of the mightiest religious empires of our planet. Half the Methodism, nearly half the entire Protestantism of the new world, lies now beyond the Alleghanies. Strenuous with life and energies, boundless in resources, continually rearing churches, academies, colleges, publishing houses, and, above all, noble men and women, this "great West," for which Methodism showed such a wise prescience, and heroic devotion, seems destined soon to be the fountain-head, the reservoir, not only of material, but of moral resources for the western hemisphere, if not indeed for the whole earth.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL CONFERENCES, 1808–1816.

Necessity of a Delegated Form of the Conference — Session of 1808 — "Committee of Fourteen" on Representative Reorganization — "Presiding Elder Question" — Delegation Adopted — The "Restrictive Rules" — Bishop Coke's Relation to the Church — His attempt to Unite it with the Protestant Episcopal Church — Decisive Evidence that no General Conference was held between 1784 and 1792; Note — Coke's Explanation — His Treatment by the Conference — M'Kendree elected Bishop — Other Proceedings — The Occasion in the Baltimore Churches — M'Kendree's Remarkable Sermon — Session of 1812, first Delegated General Conference — Leading Members — M'Kendree's "Address" — Proceedings — Slavery — Local Elders — Temperance — Elective Presiding Eldership — Session of 1816 — Canadian Territorial Question — George and Roberts elected Bishops — "Course of Study" — Other Proceedings — Slavery.

I HAVE traced the legislative development of the Church, by the General Conference, down to the end of the session of 1804. The next meeting of that body was in Baltimore, May 6, 1808. It had been anticipated with no little interest, as the change of its organization, to a delegated assembly, was generally expected. For years Asbury and other leading men had advocated this modification; it had now become an obvious necessity by the magnitude of the body, and the preponderance of the central Conferences in its proceedings. At the present session Virginia, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, had one hundred members out of the whole number of one hundred and twenty-nine recorded at the opening of the Conference; Philadelphia and Baltimore Conferences had sixty-three, half of the

whole, lacking three.[1] A memorial, asking for a reconstruction of the Conference as a delegated body, had been addressed, early in 1807, to the annual Conferences, by the New York Conference. It was approved by the New England, Ohio, and South Carolina Conferences; but, as it proposed, for the purpose, an extra session in the same year, it was defeated in the Virginia Conference, chiefly by the influence of Jesse Lee, who, nevertheless, was decidedly in favor of a representative organization of the body, and successfully advocated the measure in the next Virginia session,[2] held three months before that of the General Conference. A committee of two members from each annual Conference, making fourteen in all, was now appointed to report on the subject. They were Cooper and Wilson, of New York Conference; Pickering and Soule, of New England; M'Kendree and Burke, of the Western; Phœbus and Randle, of South Carolina; Bruce and Lee, of Virginia; Roszell and Reed, of Baltimore; M'Claskey and Ware, of Philadelphia. On the sixteenth of May they reported a form of law, a species of constitution for a representative General Conference. It was opposed, and postponed, that the question of the election of presiding elders, by the annual Conferences, might first be decided. Cooper and Wells moved an elective presiding eldership. It was decided in the negative by ballot (ayes 52, nays 73) on the eighteenth of May, and the same day the report of the "Committee of Fourteen" was resumed, and rejected by a majority of seven out of a hundred and twenty one voting. Asbury and other chief advocates of the measure were profoundly afflicted by this result. The New England, and most of the

[1] General Conference Journals, vol. i, p. 71

[2] Dr. Lee's Life of Lee, p. 429.

western members, who had been sent by election, as representatives of their distant Conferences, which could not generally attend, retired, and threatened to return home.[3] Consultations ensued, and, four days later, the question was again resumed by motions of George, Roszell, Soule, Pickering, and Lee. On the twenty-fourth the report of the committee was substantially adopted, "almost unanimously."[4] It provided that one representative for every five members of the annual Conferences shall be sent to the General Conference; that the latter shall have "full powers" to make "rules and regulations" for the Church under certain "restrictions," to wit, that it shall not change the Articles of Religion; nor allow more than one delegate for every five, nor less than one for every seven members of an annual Conference; nor do away episcopacy or the itinerancy of the episcopate; nor change the "General Rules;" nor abolish the right of trial and appeal of accused preachers and members; nor "appropriate the produce of the Book Concern or Chartered Fund," except for the benefit of ministers and their families. These restrictions could, however, be suspended by the joint recommendation of all the annual Conferences, together with a majority of two thirds of the General Conference. Such are what are usually called the Restrictive Rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church. With the "Articles of Religion," and the "General Rules," they compose the organic or constitutional law of the denomination. They are attributed chiefly to Joshua Soule; a sub committee of the fourteen, consisting of Soule, Cooper, and Bruce, having prepared them. In their form, at this time, they leave open to change, the fundamental interests of the Church,

[3] Elliott's Life of Bishop Roberts, p. 159.
[4] Bangs's "History," vol. ii, p. 231.

even its theology and terms of membership, without representation of the laity; but, in 1832, the proviso giving this power, was modified, making the Articles of Religion unalterable, and requiring a vote of three fourths of the members of the annual, and two thirds of the General, Conferences to effect any of the other specified changes. The ratio of representation has been repeatedly altered.

The relation of Bishop Coke to the American Church was much debated at this session. He was still absent in Europe. The Conference addressed him a cordial letter, consenting to his remaining abroad, at the request of the Wesleyan Conference, till recalled by the American Church, and retained his name among those of the bishops, with a proviso that he is "not to exercise his episcopal office among us" till recalled. The debate on his case was complicated with the report of his attempt, in 1791, to negotiate, with Bishop White, a union of the Methodist Episcopal and Protestant Episcopal Churches. I have heretofore alluded to this fact, so often and fallaciously cited, by opponents of the Church, as proof that Coke distrusted his episcopal consecration by Wesley.[5] The threatened disturbances of the O'Kelly controversy, which soon after broke out, together with the treatment which both Wesley and Coke had received from the American Conferences, alarmed the doctor. He rashly but conscientiously supposed that a union with the Protestant Episcopal Church might give stability to Methodism. His correspondence with White was strictly personal and confidential, and was designed solely to ascertain the possibility of the union, before he should consult Asbury and the other American leaders respecting it. Before he left the country, after writing to White,

[5] See vol. iii, p 41.

he did submit the question to Asbury, at New Castle, Del., where he embarked. Asbury "gave no decisive opinion on the subject."[6] The correspondence was kept confidential by White till 1804, when he revealed it to Simon Wilmer, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and John M'Claskey, of the Philadelphia Conference. He, still later, gave a copy of Coke's letter to "Rev. Dr. Kemp, of Maryland, and it was at last published in a controversy of the diocese." Of course it raised a storm of prejudice against Coke; but his explanatory letter to the present Conference allayed all hostility. "I had provided," he says, "in the fullest manner, in my indispensably necessary conditions, for the security, and, I may say, for the independence of our discipline and places of worship; but I thought (perhaps erroneously, and I *believe so now*) that our field of action would have been exceedingly enlarged by that junction. If it be granted that my plan of union with the old Episcopal Church was desirable, (*which now, I think, was not so*,

[6] Coke's Letter to the General Conference of 1808, in Bangs, vol. ii, p. 207. There is an important passage in this letter which further decides the question, (treated in a long note on page 37 of my third volume,) whether there was a session of the General Conference between 1784 and 1792. Coke says, January 29, 1808, "There are few of you who can possibly recollect anything of what I am next going to add. Many of you were then only little children. We had at that time [1791] no regular General Conference. One only had been held in the year 1784. I had indeed, with great labor and fatigue, a few months before I wrote this letter to Bishop White, prevailed on James O'Kelly to submit to the decision of a General Conference. This Conference was to be held in about a year and a half after my departure from the States. And at this Conference, held, I think, the latter end of 1792, I proposed and obtained that great blessing to the American connection, a permanency for General Conferences, which were to be held at stated times. Previously to the holding of this Conference (except the general one held in 1784) there were only small district meetings, excepting the council which was held at Cokesbury College either in 1791 or 1792." This, even without the decisive citation I make from Asbury in my former note, sets at rest the question.

though I most sincerely believed it to be so at that time,) then if the plan could not have been accomplished without a repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, I did believe, and do now believe, and have no doubt that the repetition of the imposition of hands would have been perfectly justifiable for the enlargement of the field of action, etc., and would not, by any means, have invalidated the former consecration or imposition of hands. Therefore I have no doubt but my consecration of Bishop Asbury was perfectly valid, and would have been so even if he had been reconsecrated. I never did apply to the general convention or any other convention for reconsecration. I never intended that either Bishop Asbury or myself should give up our episcopal office if the junction were to take place; but I should have had no scruple then, nor should I now, *if the junction were desirable*, to have submitted to, or to submit to a reimposition of hands in order to accomplish a great object; but I do say again, I do *not* now believe such a junction desirable."[7]

Both the characteristic rashness and the admirable catholicity of Coke are manifest in this affair, and the whole correspondence does more credit to his heart than discredit to his head. The Conference, in its official letter to him, after thoroughly investigating the case, properly said, "You may be assured that we feel an affectionate regard for you; that we gratefully remember your repeated labors of love toward us; and that we sensibly feel our obligations for the services you have rendered us. We hope that no circumstance will ever alienate our Christian affection from you, or yours from us."

The ecclesiastical system of the Church had been so

[7] The italics are his own.

thoroughly developed and established, by this time, that the further proceedings of the Conference present little more than the enactment of administrative details. A hearty letter from the British Conference said that "respecting our union, dear brethren, we think of no separation from you, except the great Atlantic." The American Conference responded, "Respecting our union, brethren, we can say with you, we know no separation save the Atlantic." They devoutly congratulate one another on their late success and greater prospects. By the death of Whatcoat the aged Asbury was left alone in the episcopate. M'Claskey and Cooper moved that it should be reinforced by the consecration of seven men, proposing a modified diocesan episcopacy, there being seven Conferences at this time.[8] Ostrander and Soule proposed two, Roszell and Pitts one. On the 12th of May M'Kendree was elected to the office by ninety-five votes out of a hundred and twenty-eight, and consecrated in Light-street Church on the 17th. Ezekiel Cooper and Jesse Lee were the other candidates. Ezekiel Cooper resigned the Book Agency, and John Wilson and Daniel Hitt were elected to that office. It was enacted that, in order to ordination to deacon's orders, local preachers must be recommended by a quarterly meeting, and be approved, after examination, by the annual Conference. A change was made in the rule on the trial of Church members, for debt and other disputes, allowing a legal process in cases judged to require it. A thousand dollars were appropriated from the Book Concern to the printing of religious tracts to be given away; Asbury and his traveling companion usually scattered them over their routes. The question of slavery, which had never failed to come up in the ses-

[8] Lee's Life of Lee, see p. 435.

sions of the General Conference, was again brought up by Roszell. M'Claskey and Budd were defeated in a motion to strike out "the whole section in the Discipline on the subject." Roszell and Ware carried a resolution to "retain the first two paragraphs of the section," and to authorize the annual Conferences to "form their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves." It was ordered that "a thousand forms of Discipline be prepared for South Carolina, with the section and rule on slavery left out." By motion of Lee and Ware, the word "salary" was struck out of the Discipline, and the word "allowance" inserted in its place.

The Conference adjourned on the 26th of May, having sat twenty days. Boehm, who was present, gives us a few glimpses of the exterior incidents of the session. He says there was much eloquent and powerful preaching. "On Sunday, the 8th, George Pickering preached in the market-house, and three preachers exhorted after him. There was a mighty shaking among the people. This was early in the morning. At half past ten I heard William M'Kendree from 'Is there no balm in Gilead,' etc. This was the eloquent sermon that made him bishop. Dr. Bangs gives a graphic description of it. Slow in his commencement, he rose with his subject, till his audience were melted like wax before the fire. In the afternoon Stith Mead, from Virginia, preached at Oldtown. Bishop Asbury preached, in Eutaw-street, the opening sermon of the new chapel, from 2 Cor. iii, 12, 'Seeing then we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.' The crowd was immense and the sermon characteristic. There was not only preaching on Sunday, but three times every day in the Light-street Church, and every evening in the four other churches, namely: The Point, Oldtown,

African, and Eutaw. Several souls were converted during the week. Sunday, the 15th, was a great day. William M'Kendree, bishop elect, preached at seven o'clock in the Marsh market. My record says: 'This was an awful time of the power and presence of the Lord.' At ten o'clock Asbury preached in Light-street Church, and the sheep were gloriously fed by the under shepherd; in the afternoon Jacob Gruber in German, at three o'clock, in Otterbein's church; M'Kendree again at five in the Eutaw; and John M'Claskey at Light-street in the evening. On Wednesday, the 18th, William M'Kendree was consecrated to the office and work of a bishop. Asbury preached from 1 Tim. iv, 16, 'Take heed unto thyself,' etc. Freeborn Garrettson, Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, and Thomas Ware assisted Bishop Asbury in the ordination service, they being the oldest ministers present. Sunday, the 22d, was a great day in Baltimore. George Pickering preached in the new church at six in the morning; at ten, Samuel Coates, in Oldtown; at three, Jacob Gruber, at the African Church; at five, Ezekiel Cooper in Eutaw-street Church. Jesse Lee preached in the evening at Light-street, from John v, 40. Thus ended this day of privileges, the last Sabbath of the General Conference in Baltimore in 1808. I have given a statement of the preaching, for this has not been done. Others have dwelt upon the doings of the General Conference during the week, and have said but little of what was done on Sunday. But to hear these giants in the pulpit, these master workmen, was a privilege that afforded me consolation in after years. It will be seen they preached early in the morning, and had five services a day. There was a great deal more preaching during the General Conference. I have simply

named the men I heard. The business of the Conference was done in great harmony. There were masterly debates on the great questions of Church polity that came before them, but all was done in love."

Nathan Bangs was at this Conference as a spectator. He had been laboring on Canada circuits, and had hardly heard of M'Kendree, whose fame, nevertheless, now filled all the West. Bangs went, on Sunday, to Light-street Church, the center of interest, the cathedral of the occasion, and of the denomination. He says, "It was filled to overflowing. The second gallery, at one end of the chapel, was crowded with colored people. I saw the preacher of the morning enter the pulpit, sunburnt, and dressed in very ordinary clothes, with a red flannel shirt, which showed a large space between his vest and small clothes. He appeared more like a poor backwoodsman than a minister of the gospel. I felt mortified that such a looking man should have been appointed to preach on such an imposing occasion. In his prayer he seemed to lack words, and even stammered. I became uneasy for the honor of the Conference and the Church. He gave out his text: 'For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?' As he advanced in his discourse a mysterious magnetism seemed to emanate from him to all parts of the house. He was absorbed in the interest of his subject; his voice rose gradually till it sounded like a trumpet; at a climactic passage the effect was overwhelming. It thrilled through the assembly like an electric shock; the house rang with irrepressible re-

sponses; many hearers fell prostrate to the floor. An athletic man, sitting by my side, fell as if shot by a cannon-ball. I felt my own heart melting, and feared that I should also fall from my seat. Such an astonishing effect, so sudden and overpowering, I seldom or never saw before."

Bangs refers, again, in his History of the Church, to this sermon, and says he saw "a halo of glory around the preacher's head." M'Kendree's general recognition as leader of western Methodism, together with his evident fitness for the episcopal office, doubtless led to his nomination; but this remarkable discourse placed his election beyond doubt. "That sermon," said Asbury, "will decide his election." Asbury had formerly favored Lee's appointment to the episcopate; M'Kendree had become endeared to him in the conflicts of the West, and he now saw reason to prefer him even to Lee. The Church had become rich in great and eligible men.

On May 1, 1812, the first delegated General Conference assembled in the "old John-street Church," New York. Garrettson, Ostrander, Bangs, Clark, Merwin, and eight other members of New York Conference were there; Pickering, Hedding, Soule, and six others from New England; Owen, Batchelor, and four more from Genesee; Blackman, Lakin, Quinn, Sale, Collins, Parker, Axley, and six more from the West; Myers, Pierce, Kenneday, Dunwody, and five others from South Carolina; Lee, Bruce, Douglas, Early, and five more from Virginia; Reed, Wells, Snethen, George, Shinn, Roberts, Ryland, and eight others from Baltimore; Cooper, M'Claskey, Sargent, Ware, Roszell, and nine others from Philadelphia; the whole number being ninety No provision had been made in the law of the Church

for substitutes, to take the place of members who should fail to be present by death or other cause. But New England had the forethought to provide three for such an exigency. The "Conference took into consideration the propriety of the principle," says the journal, and approved it, and the example has ever since prevailed.

M'Kendree submitted a written address or message to the Conference, the first example of the kind. "Upon examination," he said, "you will find the work of the Lord is prospering in our hands. Our important charge has greatly increased since the last General Conference; we have had an increase of nearly forty thousand members. At present we have about one hundred and ninety thousand members, upward of two thousand local, and about seven hundred traveling preachers in our connection, and these widely scattered over seventeen states, besides the Canadas and several of the territorial settlements."

He specified many interests of the denomination which needed the revision of the Conference. His suggestions were referred to committees, after which Asbury addressed the assembly extemporaneously on the history of the Church, its appropriate policy for the future, and particularly the expediency of increasing the number of annual Conferences. The legality of the organization of the Genesee Conference, two years before, had been questioned; the Conference now sanctioned that measure. It also divided the Western Conference into two, the Ohio and the Tennessee, and authorized the bishops to form another, "down the Mississippi," if they should judge it expedient. After protracted debate the ordination of local preachers, as elders, was voted: but only for localities where the "official serv-

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ices" of local elders might be necessary, and "provided that no slaveholder shall be eligible to the office of local elder in any state or territory where the civil laws will admit emancipation, and suffer the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom." It was ordered that the Magazine, which had been published in 1789 and 1790, should be revived, but it was not, till six years later. The preceding session had disapproved of the manuscript of Lee's "History of the Methodists," which had been submitted to the examination of a committee; the Conference now voted that the annual Conferences should collect, by committees, historical materials, and the New York Conference employ a historian to prepare them for publication; a proceeding which seems to have been soon forgotten. It was ordered that stewards should no longer be appointed by the preacher in charge, but be nominated by him, and appointed by the quarterly Conference. Annual Conferences were allowed to provide funds for the relief of their own preachers, and "for mission purposes." Axley stood up persistently for his "temperance" reform, moving repeatedly, against motions to lay on the table, that "no stationed or local preacher shall retail spirituous or malt liquors without forfeiting his ministerial character among us." At the third effort he was defeated. David Young moved that "the Conference inquire into the nature and moral tendency of slavery." The motion was laid on the table, but the question was irrepressible. The Conference sent forth a long and fervent pastoral address, in which, among many important counsels, it paid some respect to Axley's defeated motions. "It is with regret," it says, "that we have seen the use of ardent spirits, dram-drinking, etc., so common among the Methodists. We have endeavored

to suppress the practice by our example, but it is necessary that we add precept to example; and we really think it not consistent with the character of a Christian to be immersed in the practice of distilling or retailing an article so destructive to the morals of society, and we do most earnestly recommend the annual Conferences and our people to join with us in making a firm and constant stand against an evil which has ruined thousands both in time and eternity."

Two days were spent in a great debate on the question of the election of presiding elders by the annual Conferences. Lee, Shinn, and Snethen were the leaders of the affirmative, and many of the ablest delegates shared their opinions; but they were defeated, the bishops being known as profoundly opposed to it. At every session of the General Conference, since 1784, down to 1828, (with the possible exception of that of 1804,) this question obtruded itself,[9] arraying the chief men of the ministry against each other in formidable parties. In the session of 1812 the majority against the change was but three; the delegates of Philadelphia, New York, and Genesee were pledged to it; the southern and western members were mostly opposed to it. Lee, Cooper, Garrettson, Ware, Phœbus, and Hunt were its most strenuous advocates.

In 1816 the Conference again assembled on the first of May in Baltimore. The war with Great Britain had just closed, and left, as has been noticed, some disturbance between the Wesleyan and American Methodist

[9] Lee's Life of Lee, p. 475, note. Bangs (ii, 332) is erroneous in supposing that there is nothing in the Conference records relating to this question from 1792 to 1808. The record of 1800 shows that it was then acted upon.

bodies by the encroachment of Wesleyan missionaries on the Canadian appointments. Case and Ryan were present to represent the Canadian Church on the subject; Black and Bennett, from Nova Scotia, represented the Wesleyans. A letter from the English Missionary Board was read, full of congratulations and cordial sentiments, but soliciting the cession of the Montreal appointment, and Lower Canada generally, to their control. A committee, after consulting with the Canada representatives, reported that the great majority of the Methodists, of both Upper and Lower Canada, wished the continuance of the jurisdiction of the American Church, and that therefore "we cannot, consistently with our duty to the societies, give up any part of them." The Conference voted a hundred dollars for the expense of the British messengers from Nova Scotia, and an amicable letter to the Wesleyan Missionary Board.

On the fourteenth Enoch George and Robert R. Roberts were elected bishops, the former by fifty-seven, the latter by fifty, votes, out of one hundred and six. A course of study, to be prepared by the bishops, or a committee appointed by them, for ministerial candidates, who were to be examined at the annual Conferences, was ordered; the first example of any such requisition in the Church, though habits of reading and study had always been enjoined. Measures were adopted providing for the better support of the ministry; for repressing heretical opinions; for abolishing pews (which were yet confined to New England Churches) and assessments, or taxes, in support of preaching; and for the licensing of exhorters. Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason were elected Book Agents, and the order for the publication of the "Methodist Magazine" was repeated

by a motion of Bangs, and about two years later obeyed. The question of the election of presiding elders was again elaborately debated, but lost. Pickering moved that the "unfinished business of the last General Conference so far as it relates to slavery" be referred to a select committee. The committee reported their "opinion that, in existing circumstances, little can be done to abolish a practice so contrary to the principles of moral justice. They are sorry to say that the evil appears to be past remedy, and they are led to deplore the destructive consequences which have already accrued, and are yet likely to result therefrom. They find that in the South and West the civil authorities render emancipation impracticable, and, notwithstanding they are led to fear that some of our members are too easily contented with laws so unfriendly to freedom, yet, nevertheless, they are constrained to admit that to bring about such a change in the civil code as would favor the cause of liberty is not in the power of the General Conference. They have also made inquiry into the regulations pursued by the annual Conferences in relation to this subject, and they find that some of them have made no efficient rules on the subject of slavery, thereby leaving our people to act as they please." It was therefore "*Resolved*, by the delegates of the annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, That all the recommendatory part of the second division, ninth section, and first answer of our form of Discipline, after the word 'slavery,' be stricken out, and the following words inserted: 'Therefore no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter where the laws of the state in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy

freedom.'" The report was adopted on a motion by Pickering.

A Book Depository at Pittsburgh was authorized, and the Missouri and Mississippi Conferences established. Axley, aided by Myers, again struck against the distillation and retailing of spirituous liquors, but without success. The Conference adjourned on the twenty-fourth of May.

CHAPTER XIII.

AUXILIARY PLANS AND INSTITUTIONS; LITERARY, EDUCATIONAL, MISSIONARY, ETC.

Practical Adjuncts of the Methodistic System — Its Use of the Press — Wesley the Founder of the System of "Cheap Publications" — Great Variety of his Literary Works — Publishing Enterprise of American Methodism — Robert Williams begins it — Early Legislation respecting it — Origin of the Book Concern — Beauchamp's "Christian Monitor" — "Zion's Herald" — Progress of the Book Concern — Its present Condition and Usefulness — The Sunday-School — Wesleyan Methodism first Incorporates it in the Church — Asbury Establishes the First in America — Early Legislation of the Church respecting it — Sunday-School Union — Results — Education — Early Attempts for it — Asbury's Devotion to it — Results — Missions — Relative Position of Methodism in their History — Coke — Sketch of the Progress of American Methodism in Domestic and Foreign Missions — German Methodism.

The practical, or Disciplinary, as well as the Theological, system of Methodism has been minutely defined in its appropriate place.[1] But a Church must, in this age, have other, not to say extra-ecclesiastical, means of labor if it would meet the ever varying wants of the world, and not stagnate and die. Methodism has habitually been adding such auxiliaries to its working system. They have been noted in their due time, as they have, one after another, sprung up; but their fuller consideration has been reserved till the present stage of our narrative, when their series—literary, educational, and missionary — had become substantially complete. In order to estimate them adequately, their results, beyond

[1] At the organization of the Church, vol. ii, b. 3, particularly chaps 4 and 5.

our chronological limits, must be, and can legitimately be, briefly anticipated. They afford some of the most important and startling facts of the history of the Church.

American Methodism from its organization, and even before that date, appreciated the importance of the press. The example and injunctions of Wesley kept the denomination, not only in England, but wherever it extended, zealous in the diffusion not only of religious literature, but of "useful knowledge" in general. He was the founder of the system of "cheap publications;" cheap prices sustained by large sales.[2] The literary labors of Wesley would seem, aside from all his other services, to be sufficient for the lives of half a score of men. A German historian of Methodism[3] classifies, with German elaborateness, the great variety of his literary works, as Poetical, Philological, Philosophical, Historical, and Theological. Though he probably wrote before

[2] Lackington, the famous London publisher, claimed this distinction; but Wesley preceded him, at least in religious literature, and Lackington, who was a Methodist, was set up in business by the aid of Wesley's "Fund," established at City Road for the assistance of poor business men.

[3] Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England, aus Glaubwürdigen Quellen, etc. Von Dr. Johann Gotlieb Burkhard, etc. Nurnberg, 1795. My copy of this work is the only one in this country, so far as I know. It was printed within four years after the death of Wesley, and is the first History of Methodism ever published, if we except Wesley's own pamphlet sketch. Burkhard was pastor of a German Church "in the Savoy," London. He was personally acquainted with the Wesleys, Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon, and the other Methodist founders, and obtained his data from immediate sources. No Methodist writer has hitherto seemed to be aware of the existence of his "history." Whitehead, the executor and biographer of Wesley, says that he found among his papers a Latin letter from Burkhard, requesting documentary materials, etc., but knew nothing of the result. The work is in two volumes in one. I have availed myself of it in the "History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism," etc.

Wesley's death, he states that many of these writings, after ten or twenty editions, could not be obtained without difficulty, and the whole could not be purchased for less than ten guineas, notwithstanding they were published at rates surprisingly cheap. A catalogue of his publications, printed about 1756, contains no less than one hundred and eighty-one articles, in prose and verse, English and Latin, on grammar, logic, medicine, music, poetry, theology, and philosophy. Two thirds of these publications were for sale at less than one shilling each, and more than one fourth at a penny. They were thus brought within reach of the poorest of his people. "Simplify religion and every part of learning," he wrote to Benson, who was the earliest of his lay preachers addicted to literary labors. To all his itinerants he said, "See that every society is supplied with books, some of which ought to be in every house." In addition to his collected works, (fourteen octavo volumes in the English edition, and seven in the American,) his Biblical "Notes" and abridgments make a catalogue of one hundred and eighteen prose productions, (a single one of which, "The Christian Library," contains fifty volumes,) forty-nine poetical publications by himself and his brother, and five distinct works on music. Not content with books and tracts, Wesley projected, in August, 1777, the Arminian Magazine, and issued the first number at the beginning of 1778. It was one of the first four religious magazines which sprung from the resuscitated religion of the age, and which began this species of periodical publications in the Protestant world. It is now the oldest religious periodical. It may be questioned whether any English writer of the last or the present century has equaled Wesley in the number of his productions.

American Methodism has always been true to this example of English Methodism, and in fact has far transcended it. Its "Book Concern" is now the largest religious publishing house in the world.[4]

We have seen the beginnings of this literary agency in the printing and circulation of Wesley's sermons by Robert Williams, one of the earliest lay evangelists, who, according to Lee's history of the Church, "spread them through the country, to the great advantage of religion, opening the way for the preachers where these had never been before." But as early as the first Conference (1773) this individual or independent publishing was prohibited, the "consent of the brethren" being required, because, as Lee writes, "it now became necessary for all the preachers to be united in the same course, so that the profits ensuing therefrom might be divided among them, or applied to some charitable purpose." "Be active," commanded the Church to its ministry at its organization of 1784, "be active in the diffusion of Mr. Wesley's books. Every 'assistant' may beg money of the rich to buy 'books for the poor;'" and it was ordained at the same time that "they should take care that every society be duly supplied with books." The Conferences of 1787 made further provisions for the purpose, and "from this time," says Lee, "we began to publish more of our own books than ever before, and the principal part of the business was carried on in New York." No publisher or "Book Agent" was yet named, however; but, two years later, we find Philip Cox and John Dickins designated to that office in the Minutes. The former acted as a sort of colporteur at large for three years, the first American example

[4] See "History of the Religious Movement," etc., vol. ii, p. 491, *et seq.*, where a fuller account of Wesleyan literature is given.

of that useful office, and died in it, "after circulating," says his obituary in the Minutes, "many hundred books of religious instruction." Dickins, the only Methodist preacher in Philadelphia in 1789, began there, at that time, the "Methodist Book Concern," in addition to his pastoral labors. The first volume issued by him was the "Christian Pattern," Wesley's translation of Kempis's celebrated "Imitation." The Methodist Discipline, the Hymn Book, Wesley's Primitive Physic, and reprints of the first volume of the Arminian Magazine, and Baxter's Saint's Rest, followed. The only capital of the Concern was about six hundred dollars, lent to it by Dickins himself. In 1790 portions of Fletcher's "Checks" were reprinted. In 1797 a "Book Committee" was appointed, to whom all books were to be submitted before their publication. In 1804 the Concern was removed from Philadelphia to the city of New York. As early as 1796 the General Conference ordained the publication of a "Methodist Magazine," in imitation of Wesley's periodical; it was not successfully attempted till 1818. It still prosperously continues, under the title of the Methodist Quarterly Review. Western Methodism had, however, anticipated it by the publication of Beauchamp's "Christian Monitor," at Chilicothe, Ohio, in 1815. In 1824 the Concern secured premises of its own on Crosby-street, with presses, bindery, etc. In 1823 the "Youth's Instructor," a monthly work, was begun. The same spirit of enterprise led to the publication of the Christian Advocate and Journal, which appeared, for the first time, on the ninth of September, 1826. But New England preceded the rest of the Church in providing for this want; in 1815 a publication was commenced, entitled, "The New England

Missionary Magazine." It was edited by Martin Ruter, and printed at Concord, N. H., by Isaac Hill; but it ceased after four quarterly numbers had been issued. In 1821 the New England Conference formed an association, styled the "Society for Giving and Receiving Religious Intelligence." This gave rise to Zion's Herald, printed by Moore and Prouse, under the direction of the committee of the society, of which Elijah Hedding was president. The first number was issued January 9, 1823, on a small royal sheet, the pages measuring only nine by sixteen inches. Such was the origin of the first weekly publication of Methodism in the world; a paper which has had an unsurpassed power on the great questions and crises of the Church.

The success of the Advocate was remarkable. "In a very short time," writes Bangs, one of its original publishers, "its number of subscribers far exceeded every other paper published in the United States, being about twenty-five thousand. It soon increased to thirty thousand, and was probably read by more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons, young and old." It should be noticed also that, at the earnest request of Methodists west of the mountains, the General Conference of 1820 authorized the establishment of a branch of the Book Concern in Cincinnati, under Martin Ruter, a precedent which led to secondary branches in various parts of the country. The rapid increase of the business very soon made it necessary to enlarge its buildings. Accordingly all the vacant ground in Crosby-street was occupied. But even these additions were found insufficient to accommodate the several departments of labor, so as to furnish the supply of books, now in constantly increasing demand. Five lots were

therefore purchased on Mulberry-street, between Broome and Spring streets, and one building erected in the rear for a printing office and bindery, and another of larger dimensions projected. In the month of September, 1833, the entire establishment was removed into the new buildings. In these commodious rooms, with efficient agents and editors at work, everything seemed to be going on prosperously, when suddenly in 1836 the entire property was consumed by fire at night. The Church thus lost not less than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The buildings, all the printing and binding materials, a vast quantity of books, bound and in sheets, a valuable library which the editor had been collecting for years, were in a few hours destroyed. Fortunately the "Concern" was not in debt. By hiring an office temporarily, and employing outside printers, the agents soon resumed their business, the smaller works were put to press, and "the Church's herald of the news, the Christian Advocate and Journal, soon took its flight again (though the first number after the fire had its wings much shortened) through the symbolical heavens, carrying the tidings of our loss, and of the liberal and steady efforts which were making to reinvigorate the paralyzed Concern."

At the General Conference of 1836 the plan of a new building was submitted and approved. It went up with all convenient dispatch, in a much better style, more durable, and safer against fire than the former structure. The front edifice is one hundred and twenty-one feet in length, and thirty in breadth, four stories high above the basement, with offices for the agents and clerks, a bookstore, committee rooms, etc. The building in the rear is sixty-five feet in length, thirty in breadth, and

four stories high, and is used for stereotying, printing, binding, etc. Large additions have since been made.

In our day (1866) the Methodist Book Concern, aside from that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was founded by a division of its funds, comprises two branches, eastern and western, and seven deposit ories, with an aggregate capital of more than $837,000. Four "Book Agents," appointed by the General Conference, manage its business. It has twelve editors of its periodicals, nearly five hundred clerks and operatives, and between twenty and thirty cylinder and power presses constantly in operation. It publishes about five hundred "General Catalogue" bound books, besides many in the German and other languages, and about fifteen hundred Sunday-school volumes. A Tract Society is one of its adjuncts, and its tract publications number about nine hundred in various tongues. Its periodicals are a mighty agency, including one Quarterly Review, four monthlies, one semi-monthly, and eight weeklies, with an aggregate circulation of over one million of copies per month. Its Quarterly and some of its weeklies have a larger circulation than any other periodicals of the same class in the nation, probably in the world.

The influence of this great institution, in the diffusion of popular literature and the creation of a taste for reading among the great masses of the denomination, has been incalculable. It has scattered periodicals and books all over the valley of the Mississippi. Its sales in that great domain, in the quadrennial period ending with January 31, 1864, amounted to about $1,200,000. If Methodism had made no other contribution to the progress of knowledge and civilization in the New World than that of this powerful institution, this alone

would suffice to vindicate its claim to the respect of the enlightened world. Its ministry has often been falsely disparaged as unfavorable to knowledge; but it should be borne in mind that its ministry founded this stupendous means of popular intelligence, and has continued to work it with increasing success up to the present time. They have been, as we have seen, its salesmen, and have scattered its publications over their circuits. Wesley enjoined this service upon them in their Discipline. "Carry books with you on every round," he said; "leave no stone unturned in this work;" and thus have they spread knowledge in their courses over the whole land, and built up their unparalleled "Book Concern." There has never been an instance of defalcation on the part of its "agents;" it has never failed in any of the financial revulsions of the country; and it is now able, by its large capital, to meet any new literary necessity of the denomination. Among its agents and editors have been some of the ablest men of the Church, some of whom have been noticed, but most of whom pertain to dates beyond our limits. Ten of them have been called from its service to the episcopate in the northern Church alone.[5]

The Sunday-school system of the Church has been closely allied to its Book Concern. I have heretofore given some account of its origin,[6] showing that Methodism shared in that important event in England; that it

[5] While preparing the present work the author was called upon to provide a "Centenary Book" for the celebration of 1866, by condensing such parts of his published volumes, and the manuscript contents of this, as might be appropriate. In abridging some portions he also enlarged others, especially the minuter statistics, in order to adap the book to its special occasion. Readers who wish more complete figures on this and the ensuing subjects are referred to the "Centenary Book," and also to the "Life of Dr. Bangs."

[6] Vol. ii, p. 503.

first incorporated the institution in the Church; that Francis Asbury established the first school of the kind in the new world in 1786, at the house of Thomas Crenshaw, in Hanover County, Va.; and that this first attempt prefigured one of the greatest later advantages of the institution by giving a useful preacher to the denomination. In 1790 the first recognition of Sunday-schools by an American Church was made by the vote of the Methodist Conferences, ordering their formation throughout the Church, and also the compilation of a book for them. Methodism for many years made no provision for the general organization or affiliation of its Sunday-schools. Its Book Concern issued some volumes suitable for their libraries, chiefly by the labors of John P. Durbin, who prepared its first library volume, and its first Question Book; but no adequate, no systematic attention was given to this sort of literature. It was obvious, on a moment's reflection, that an almost illimitable field for the enlargement of the business of the Concern, and the diffusion of useful knowledge, was at its command in this direction. Accordingly the "Sunday-School Union" was organized on the second of April, 1827. Bangs says that "the measure was hailed with grateful delight by our friends and brethren throughout the country. It received the sanction of the several annual Conferences, which recommended the people of their charge to form auxiliaries in every circuit and station, and send to the general depository in New York for their books; and such were the zeal and unanimity with which they entered into this work, that at the first annual meeting of the society there were reported 251 auxiliaries, 1,025 schools, 2,048 superintendents, 10,290 teachers, and 63,240 scholars, besides above 2,000 managers and visitors. Never, therefore, did an institution go into operation

under more favorable circumstances, or was hailed with a more universal joy, than the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This great success, however, could not save it from the misfortunes of bad management. Under "an injudicious attempt," continues Bangs, many years later, "to amalgamate the Bible, Tract, and Sunday-School Societies together, by which the business of these several societies might be transacted by one board of management," and by other causes, it declined, if indeed it did not fail, until resuscitated by the zeal of some New York Methodists, and by an act of the General Conference of 1840. It passed through modifications till it assumed its present effective form of organization, and grew into colossal proportions under the labors of its indefatigable secretaries, Drs Kidder and Wise. It now (1866) has (aside from its offspring in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South) 13,400 schools, more than 150,000 teachers and officers, and near 918,000 scholars, about 19,000 of whom are reported as converted during the last year. There are in the libraries of these schools more than 2,529,000 volumes. They are supported at an annual expense of more than $216,000, besides nearly $18,000 given to the Union for the assistance of poor schools. There are circulated among them, semi-monthly, nearly 260,000 "Sunday-School Advocates," the juvenile periodical of the Union. The numbers of conversions among pupils of the schools, as reported for the last eighteen years, amount to more than 285,000, showing that much of the extraordinary growth of the Church is attributable to this mighty agency. The Union has four periodicals for teachers and scholars, two in English, and two in German, and their aggregate circulation is nearly 300,000 per number. Its catalogue of Sunday-school books

comprises more than 2,300 different works, of which more than a million copies are issued annually. Including other issues, it has nearly 2,500 publications adapted to the use of Sunday-schools. In fine, few, if any, institutions of American Methodism wield a mightier power than its Sunday-School Union. These figures, however, show but partially the Sunday-school enterprise of American Methodism, as they do not include those of its several branches, which, at dates subsequent to the period reached by our narrative, grew out of, and broke from, the parent Church. These will hereafter be given.

We have already had frequent intimations in these pages of the interest of Methodism for Education. The founders of the denomination in England were classically educated men, and it had its birth in a university. Wesley, in the very year which is recognized as its epoch, (1739,) began its noted "Kingswood School," and at his first Conference (1744) proposed a theological school, a "seminary for laborers," or lay preachers, a project which was at last realized by the present two "Theological Institutions" of English Methodism. American Methodism early shared this interest of the parent body in education. Dickins had proposed, as early as 1780, an academic institution for the denomination. In the year of the organization of the Church (1784) Coke and Asbury projected the Cokesbury College, and laid its foundations the next year at Abingdon, Md. In 1787 Asbury consecrated and opened it with public ceremonies. In 1795 it was destroyed by fire; but a second edifice was soon after provided in Baltimore; this, however, shared the fate of its predecessor in precisely one year. It has been supposed that these disasters not only discouraged Asbury, but led him falla-

ciously to infer that Providence designed not the denomination to devote its energy to education. It was far otherwise, however, with that great man. He did not believe that collegiate or pretentious institutions of learning should be attempted by the Church while yet in its infancy, but he never abandoned the design of secondary or more practically adapted institutions. He formed indeed a grand scheme, as we have seen, for the establishment of academies all over the territory of the denomination, one for each "district," a district then being a Conference.

As far south as Georgia contributions in land and tobacco were received for the founding of a college there in 1789; and in the yet frontier settlements of Redstone, Pa., and Kentucky, seminaries were attempted under Asbury's auspices. In 1789 overtures for an academy in Kentucky were approved by him and the Conferences, and the next year the Western Conference began subscriptions for it. At Bethel, Ky., an edifice and organization were really established, but financially broke down at last, prostrating the health and intellect of Poythress by its fall. At Uniontown, Western Pennsylvania, an academy was started in 1794 or 1795 by Asbury's influence, and survived some few years, educating Thomas Bell, Samuel Parker, and other eminent men. Thus in its primitive struggles of the last century, did the Church show its appreciation of education. In 1792 Asbury was ambitious to place "two thousand children under the best plan of education ever known in this country."

Before the close of the last century Hope Hull established an academy in Wilkes County, Ga., and we have seen Roberts, M'Henry, and Valentine Cook personally devoting themselves to the work of education. In 1818

Dr. Samuel K. Jennings and other Methodists attempted a college in Baltimore, but this also failed. No failures, however, no discouragement, could obliterate from the mind of the denomination the conviction of its responsibility for the education of the increasing masses of its people. In 1820 the General Conference recommended that all the annual Conferences should establish seminaries within their boundaries, thus proposing to supply the whole republic with such schools, though with considerable territorial intervals. This demonstration of interest for education in the supreme body of the Church was prompted by the spontaneous enterprise of the ministry and the people, who, three years before, had, chiefly under the guidance of Martin Ruter, started an institution in New England, (at New Market, N. H.,) still distinguished, in its later location, at Wilbraham, Mass.; and in 1819 another, chiefly under the guidance of Nathan Bangs, in New York city, afterward transferred to White Plains, N. Y. The impulse thus given not only produced numerous academies, but led, in 1823, to the beginning of Augusta College, Ky., whose edifice was erected in 1825, and commenced the series of modern collegiate institutions under the patronage of the Church, so that by the General Conference of 1832, says the biographer of Hedding, "the Wesleyan University had been established at Middletown, Conn., and Dr. Wilbur Fisk, of the New England Conference, was at its head, and John M. Smith, of the New York Conference, one of the professors. Madison College, now extinct, but whose place has since been supplied by Alleghany College, had gone into successful operation in Western Pennsylvania; J. H. Fielding had succeeded H. B. Bascom as president, and H. J. Clark was one of the professors; both were members of the Pittsburgh

Conference. Augusta College had been established under the patronage of the Kentucky and Ohio Conferences; Martin Ruter was president, and H. B. Bascom, J. S. Tomlinson, J. P. Durbin, and Burr H. M'Cown, were professors; all of them members of the Kentucky Conference except J. P. Durbin, who belonged to the Ohio. In the southwest, Lagrange College had been established; Robert Paine was president, and E. D. Simms one of the professors. In Virginia, Randolph Macon College had been established, and M. P. Parks, of the Virginia Conference, was one of its professors, and Stephen Olin was soon after placed at its head. Thus it will be seen that no less than five colleges had sprung into existence in an incredibly short time, and were already in successful operation under the supervision of the Church. Several Conference seminaries also had been established; such were the Cazenovia Seminary, the Maine Wesleyan Seminary, Wilbraham Academy, Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, Shelbyville Female Academy, and others, which were in successful operation in different parts of the Church."[7]

The Church could not pause here. Wesley, as we have seen, had proposed ministerial education at his very first Conference, and the British Methodists had embodied the proposition in two imposing "theological institutions." The New England Methodists agitated the question in their Church periodical, and in 1839 a convention was called, in Boston, to provide such an institution. It was founded with the title of the Wesleyan Institute; it struggled through severe adversities, was at first connected with the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., then merged in the Biblical Institute, Newbury, Vt., but at last was located in Concord,

[7] Bishop Clark's Life of Hedding

N. H., where it has exerted no inconsiderable influence upon the character of the New England Methodist ministry. In 1845 John Dempster, of New York city, became its professor of theology. He threw his remarkable energy into the cause of ministerial education throughout the denomination, and not only forced along the New England institution against formidable discouragements, but became a leading founder of the northwestern seminary at Evanston, Ill., where a Chicago Methodist lady, by the gift of property amounting to $300,000, gave endowment and her name to the Garrett Biblical Institute.

Thus boarding academies, colleges, and theological seminaries have rapidly grown up in the denomination till the Methodist Episcopal Church alone now (1866) reports no less than 25 colleges, (including theological schools,) having 158 instructors, 5,345 students, $3,055,861 endowments and other property, and 105,531 volumes in their libraries. It reports also 77 academies, with 556 instructors and 17,761 students, 10,462 of whom are females, making an aggregate of 102 institutions, with 714 instructors and 23,106 students. The southern division of the denomination reported before the Rebellion 12 colleges and 77 academies, with 8,000 students, making an aggregate for the two bodies of 191 institutions and 31,106 students.

The moral and social influence of such a series of educational provisions, reaching from the year of the organization of the Church to our own day, must be incalculable; and could it point the world to no other monuments of its usefulness, these would suffice to establish its claims as one of the effective means of the intellectual and moral progress of the country.

We turn to another and more immediately ecclesiasti-

cal and evangelical interest, which was formally initiated in the Church, as I have shown, before the expiration of the period which closes our narrative. American Methodism could not long fail to imitate the example of British Methodism in the "missionary cause," for the parent Church had early become pre-eminent before the Christian world in this sublime enterprise. The idea of religious missions is as old as Christianity, and has been exemplified by the Papal Church through much of its history, and in the ends of the earth. The Moravians early embodied it in their system. In the Protestantism of England it had but feeble sway till the epoch of Methodism. That grand form of it which now characterizes English Protestantism in both hemispheres, and which proposes the evangelization of the whole race, appeared in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Societies for the propagation of the gospel had previously existed in Great Britain, but they were provided chiefly, if not exclusively, for the Christianization of countries which, by reason of their political dependence upon England, were deemed to have special claims on British Christianity—the inhabitants of India and the Indians of North America. An historian of missions, writing in 1844, says: "It was not until almost within the last fifty years that the efforts of the religious bodies by whom Christian missions are now most vigorously supported were commenced."[8] Methodism was essentially a missionary movement, domestic and foreign. It initiated not only the spirit, but the practical plans of modern English missions. Bishop Coke so represented the enterprise in his own person for many years as to supersede the necessity of any more formal organization of it, but it was none the less real and

[8] Ellis's History of the London Missionary Society, vol. i, p 3.

energetic. The historian just cited says: "The Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed in 1817, but the first Wesleyan missionaries who went out, under the superintendence of Coke, entered the British colonies in 1786. The Baptist Missionary Society was established in 1792, the London Missionary Society in 1795, and the Edinburgh or Scottish and the Glasgow Missionary Societies in 1796. The subject also engaged the attention of many pious persons belonging to the Established Church, besides those connected with the London Missionary Society, and by members of that communion the Church Missionary Society was organized in the first year of the present century." The London Missionary Society, embracing most Dissenting bodies of England, arose under the influence of Calvinistic Methodism, and the Church Missionary Society sprang from the evangelical Low Church party which Methodism, Calvinistic and Arminian, had resuscitated in the Establishment, Venn, the son of the Methodist churchman Venn, being its projector.

Though Coke represented the Arminian-Methodist Mission interest as its founder, secretary, treasurer, and collector, it really took a distinct form some six years before the formation of the first of the above named societies. Coke spent more than a year in bringing the negro missions before the English people immediately after his second visit to the West Indies. In 1786 a formal address was issued to the public in behalf of a comprehensive scheme of Methodist missions. It was entitled "An Address to the Pious and Benevolent, proposing an Annual Subscription for the Support of Missionaries in the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland, the Isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the Provinces of Nova

Scotia and Quebec. By Thomas Coke, LL.D. 1786." It speaks of "a mission intended to be established in the British dominions in Asia," but which was postponed till these more inviting fields should be occupied. This scheme was called in the address an "Institution;" it was really such; though not called a society, it was one in all essential respects; and if the fact that it was not an extra-ecclesiastical plan, but a part of the system of Methodism, should detract from its claim of precedence in respect to later institutions of the kind, that consideration would equally detract from the Moravian missions, which were conducted in a like manner. The address filled several pages, and was prefaced by a letter from Wesley indorsing the whole plan.

The next year (1787) the Wesleyan Missions bore the distinctive title of "Missions established by the Methodist Society." At the last Conference attended by Wesley (1790) a committee of nine preachers, of which Coke was chairman, was appointed to take charge of this new interest. Coke continued to conduct its chief business; but the committee were his standing counsel, and formed, in fact, a Mission Board of Managers two years before the organization of the first of British Missionary Societies. Collections had been taken in many of the circuits for the Institution, and in 1793 the Conference formally ordered a general collection for it. Coke published accounts of its "receipts and disbursements."

In this manner did Methodism early prompt the British Churches, and call forth the energies of the British people, in plans of religious benevolence for the whole world. Its previous missions in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the Channel Islands did much for the reformation of the domestic population. Besides its efforts

in 1786 in the West Indies, it began its evangelical labors in France as early as 1791, and its great schemes in Africa in 1811; in Asia in 1814; in Australasia in 1815; in Polynesia in 1822; until, from the first call of Wesley for American evangelists, in the Conference of 1769, down to our day, we see the grand enterprise reaching to the shores of Sweden, to Germany, France, and the Upper Alps; to Gibraltar and Malta; to the banks of the Gambia, to Sierra Leone, and to the Gold Coast; to the Cape of Good Hope; to Ceylon, to India, and to China; to the Colonists and Aboriginal tribes of Australia; to New Zealand, and the Friendly and Fiji Islands; to the islands of the Western as well as of the Southern Hemisphere; and from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Puget's Sound. From 1803 to the present time Wesleyan Methodism has contributed more than twenty millions of dollars for foreign evangelization. In England the "Church Missionary Society" alone exceeds its annual collections for the foreign field; but the Wesleyan Society enrolls more communicants in its Mission Churches than all other British missionary societies combined. The historian of religion during the last and present centuries would find it difficult to point to a more magnificent monument of Christianity.

Coke, the first bishop of American Methodism, was to the end of his life the representative character of Methodist Missions. In his old age he offered himself, as we shall hereafter see, to the British Conference as a missionary to the East Indies. He died on the voyage, and was buried in the Indian Ocean. His death struck not only a knell through the Church, but a summons for it to rise universally and march around the world. He had long entertained the idea of universal evangelization as the exponent characteristic of the Methodist

movement. The influence of the movement on English Protestantism had tended to such a result, for in both England and America nearly all denominations had felt the power of the great revival not only during the days of Whitefield and Wesley, but ever since. Anglo Saxon Christianity, in both hemispheres, had been quickened into new life, and had experienced a change amounting to a moral revolution. The magnificent apostolic idea of evangelization in all the earth, and till all the earth should be Christianized, had not only been restored, as a practical conviction, but had become pervasive and dominant in the consciousness of the Churches, and was manifestly thenceforward to shape the religious history of the Protestant world. The great fermentation of the mind of the civilized nations—the resurrection, as it may be called, of popular thought and power—contemporaneous in the civil and religious worlds, in the former by the American and French Revolutions, in the latter by the Methodist movement—seemed to presage a new history of the human race. And history is compelled to record, with the frankest admission of the characteristic defects of Thomas Coke, that no man, not excepting Wesley or Whitefield, more completely represented the religious significance of those eventful times.

Though American Methodism was many years without a distinct missionary organization, it was owing to the fact that its whole Church organization was essentially a missionary scheme. It was, in fine, the great Home Mission enterprise of the North American continent, and its domestic work demanded all its resources of men and money. It early began, however, special labors among the aborigines and slaves. The history of some of these labors would be an exceedingly inter-

esting and even romantic record, but our limits admit but this passing allusion to them, after the account lately given of their singular origin by Stewart, the African. Their subsequent progress belongs to the historian of the ensuing periods of Methodism, and will afford some of his most thrilling facts.

The year 1819 is memorable as the epoch of the formal organization of the American Methodist missionary work. Nathan Bangs, long distinguished as its secretary and chief representative, was also its chief founder. He made it the theme of much preliminary conversation with his colleagues and the principal Methodist laymen of New York city. Laban Clark introduced it by a resolution to the attention of the metropolitan preachers at their weekly meeting, "consisting," says Bangs, "of Freeborn Garrettson, Samuel Merwin, Laban Clark, Samuel Howe, Seth Crowell, Thomas Thorp, Joshua Soule, Thomas Mason, and myself. After an interchange of thoughts the resolution was adopted, and Garrettson, Clark, and myself were appointed a committee to draft a constitution. When this committee met we agreed to write, each, a constitution, then come together, compare them, and adopt the one which should be considered the most suitable. The one prepared by myself was adopted, submitted to the Preachers' Meeting, and, after some slight verbal alterations, was finally approved. We then agreed to call a public meeting in the Forsyth-street Church on the evening of the fifth of April, 1819, which was accordingly done. I was called to the chair, and, after the reading of the constitution, Joshua Soule moved its adoption, and supported his motion by a powerful speech, concluding by an appeal to the people to come forward and subscribe it. He was seconded by

Freeborn Garrettson, who also pleaded in favor of the scheme from his experience in the itinerant field from Virginia to Nova Scotia." The constitution was unanimously adopted, and the following officers were chosen: Bishop M'Kendree, President; Bishops George and Roberts, and Nathan Bangs, Vice-presidents; Thomas Mason, Corresponding Secretary; Joshua Soule, Treasurer; Francis Hall, Clerk; Daniel Ayres, Recording Secretary. The following managers were also chosen: Joseph Smith, Robert Mathison, Joseph Sandford, George Suckley, Samuel L. Waldo, Stephen Dando, Samuel B. Harper, Lancaster S. Burling, William Duval, Paul Hick, John Westfield, Thomas Roby, Benjamin Disbrow, James B. Gascoigne, William A. Mercein, Philip J. Arcularius, James B. Oakley, George Caines, Dr. Seaman, Dr. Gregory, John Boyd, M. H. Smith, Nathaniel Jarvis, Robert Snow, Andrew Mercein, Joseph Moses, John Paradise, William Myers, William B. Skidmore, Nicholas Schureman, James Wood, Abraham Paul. The historian of the society says: "It is obvious that almost its entire business was conducted by Dr. Bangs for many years. In addition to writing the constitution, the address and circular, he was the author of every Annual Report, with but one exception, from the organization of the society down to the year 1841, a period of twenty-two years. He filled the offices of corresponding secretary and treasurer for sixteen years, without a salary or compensation of any kind, until his appointment to the first named office by the General Conference of 1836. That he has contributed more than any other man living to give character to our missionary operations, by the productions of his pen and his laborious personal efforts, is a well authenticated fact, which the history of the Church fully

attests." In this single instance of his manifold public life he was to be identified with a grand religious history. He was to see the annual receipts of the society enlarged from the $823 of its first year to $250,374, (including its offspring of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to half a million,) and its total receipts, down to the last year of his life, more than four and a half millions, not including the southern society. He was to witness the rise (chiefly under the auspices of the Society) of American German Methodism, an epochal fact in the history of his denomination, next in importance to the founding of the Church by Embury and Strawbridge. Without a recognized missionary for some time after its origin, the society was to present to his dying gaze a list of nearly four hundred, and more than thirty-three thousand mission communicants, representing the denomination in many parts of the United States, in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Africa, India, China, and South America. Assisting in this great work, and rejoicing in its triumphs, he was to outlive all its original officers but three, and all its original managers save three.

The next General Conference (in 1820) sanctioned the scheme. Emory submitted an elaborate report on the subject. After reasoning at length upon it, he asked, "Can we, then, be listless to the cause of missions? We cannot. Methodism itself is a missionary system. Yield the missionary spirit, and you yield the very life-blood of the cause. In missionary efforts our British brethren are before us. We congratulate them on their zeal and their success. But your committee beg leave to entreat this Conference to emulate their example." The Conference adopted, with some emendations, the constitution prepared for the society by Bangs. He

thus saw his great favorite measure incorporated, it may be hoped forever, into the structure of the Church. He writes: "These doings of the Conference in relation to the Missionary Society exerted a most favorable influence upon the cause, and tended mightily to remove the unfounded objections which existed in some minds against this organization." By the session of the General Conference of 1832 the society's operations had extended through the states and territories of the nation, and had become a powerful auxiliary of the itinerant system of the Church. Hitherto it had been prosecuted as a domestic scheme, for the frontier circuits, the slaves, the free colored people, and the Indian tribes; it had achieved great success in this wide field, and was now strong enough to reach abroad to other lands. It proposed, with the sanction of this Conference, to plant its standard on the coast of Africa, and send agents to Mexico and South America to ascertain the feasibility of missions in those countries. Thus were begun those foreign operations of the society which have become its most interesting labors.

Its domestic Indian missions had now become numerous, and some of them were remarkably prosperous; "attended," Bangs says, "with unparalleled success." In Upper Canada they numbered, in 1831, no less than ten stations, and nearly two thousand Indians "under religious instruction, most of whom were members of the Church. Among the Cherokees, in Georgia, they had at the same date no less than seventeen missionary laborers, and nearly a thousand Church members. Among the Choctaws there were about four thousand communicants, embracing all the principal men of the nation, their chiefs and captains." And, more or less, along the whole frontier, Indian Missions were estab-

lished. Meanwhile the destitute fields of the domestic work proper were dotted with humble but effective mission stations, from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and these stations were rapidly passing from the missionary list to the Conference catalogue of appointments as self-supporting Churches.

Melville B. Cox, whose baptism, and the reception of his family into the Church, by Kibby, in Maine, have been noticed,[9] sailed for Africa, the first foreign missionary of American Methodism. He organized the Liberia Mission. He fell a martyr to the climate, but laid on that benighted continent the foundations of the denomination, never, it may be hoped, to be shaken. About the same time some Indians from the distant regions of Oregon arrived in the states soliciting missionaries. Their appeal was zealously urged through the Christian Advocate, and received an enthusiastic response from the Church. Bangs, who had been a leading promoter of the African Mission, now, in co-operation with Fisk, advocated this new claim with his utmost ability. Jason and Daniel Lee, and Cyrus Shepard, were dispatched as missionaries. An extraordinary scheme of labors was adopted, involving great expense; but, writes Bangs, "the projection of this important mission had a most happy effect upon the missionary cause generally. As the entire funds of the society up to this time had not exceeded eighteen thousand dollars a year, and as this mission must necessarily cost considerable, with a view to augment the pecuniary resources of the society a loud and urgent call was made, through the columns of the 'Christian Advocate and Journal,' on the friends of missions to 'come up to the help of the Lord' in this

[9] See p. 43.

emergency." As an evidence of the beneficial result of these movements, the amount of available funds more than doubled in the year in which the Lees and Shepard departed to their field. The surges of emigration have overwhelmed nearly all that grand ultramontane region; the aborigines are sinking out of sight beneath them; but the Oregon Mission became the nucleus of the Christianity and civilization of the new and important state which has since arisen on the North Pacific coast.

Meanwhile Fountain C. Pitts was sent on a mission of inquiry to South America. He visited Rio Janeiro, Buenos Ayres, Monte Video, and other places, and the Methodist South American Mission was founded the next year by Justin Spaulding. Thus had the Church borne at last its victorious banner into the field of foreign missions. It was to be tried severely in these new contests, but to march on through triumphs and defeats till it should take foremost rank among denominations devoted to foreign evangelization.

The operations of the Missionary Society had now assumed such importance, and involved such responsibility, as to justify, in the judgment of the General Conference, the appointment of a special officer, or "Resident Corresponding Secretary," who could devote his whole attention to them. Of course the mind of the Conference, as indeed of the general Church, turned spontaneously to Bangs as the man for such an office, and he was elected by a large majority.

He entered with energy upon his new functions. The first year of his secretaryship was signalized by the first recognition and announcement, by the Missionary Society, of one of the most remarkable events in the history of modern missions, the beginning of the

German Methodist Missions. Professor Nast, a young German scholar of thorough but Rationalistic education, had been reclaimed by Methodism to the faith of the Reformation. He labored for some time among his countrymen in Cincinnati, and later on the Columbus District, comprising a circuit of three hundred miles, and twenty-two appointments. Thus originated the most successful, if not the most important of Methodist missions; and in the next Annual Report of the society the "German Mission," and the name of "William Nast," its founder and missionary, were first declared to the general Church. German Methodism rapidly extended through the nation, to Boston in the northeast, to New Orleans in the southwest. German Methodist Churches, circuits, districts, were organized. "In the brief space of fourteen years," says the historian of Methodist Missions, "the German Missions have extended all over the country, yielding seven thousand Church members, thirty local preachers, eighty-three regular mission circuits and stations, and one hundred and eight missionaries. One hundred churches were built for German worship, and forty parsonages. Primitive Methodism appears to have revived in the zeal and simplicity and self sacrificing devotion of the German Methodists. May they ever retain this spirit! No agency has ever been employed so specifically adapted to effect the conversion of Romanists as that which is immediately connected with the German Mission enterprise. The pastoral visitations of the preachers bringing them into immediate contact with German Catholics, their distribution of Bibles and tracts, their plain, pointed, and practical mode of preaching, all combine to bring the truth to bear upon that portion of the population; and the result is the conversion of hund

reds from the errors of Romanism." The chief importance of the German Mission has, however, been subsequently developed. It has not only raised up a mighty evangelical provision for the host of German emigrants to the new world, but under the labors of Jacoby, it has intrenched itself in the German "fatherland," and is laying broad foundations for a European German Methodism. German societies and circuits, a German Conference, a "Book Concern," with its periodicals, a Ministerial School, and all the other customary appliances of evangelical Churches, have been established; and, in our day, this Teutonic Methodism comprises, on both sides of the Atlantic, nearly thirty thousand communicants, and nearly three hundred missionaries.

It is impossible here to trace in detail the further outspread of this great interest, especially under the successful administration of its ablest secretary, John P. Durbin, nor is it appropriate to the limits of the present work. Suffice it to say that the annual receipts of the society, which, the year before his administration began, amounted to about $104,000, have risen to more than $700,000; and that, besides its very extensive domestic work, the Methodist Episcopal Church has now missions in China, India, Africa, Bulgaria, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and South America. Its missions, foreign and domestic, have 1,059 circuits and stations, 1,128 paid laborers, (preachers and assistants,) and 105,675 communicants. The funds contributed to its treasury, from the beginning amount to about $8,000,000. About 350 of the missionaries preach in the German and Scandinavian languages, and more than 30,000 of the communicants are German and Scandinavian. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had, in addition to

these before the Rebellion, missions in China, among our foreign settlers, among the American Indians, and the southern slaves. About three hundred and sixty of its preachers were enrolled as missionaries.

American, like British Methodism, has become thoroughly imbued with the apostolic idea of foreign and universal evangelization. With both bodies it is no longer an incidental or secondary attribute, but is inwrought into their organic ecclesiastical systems. It has deepened and widened till it has become the great characteristic of modern Methodism, raising it from a revival of vital Protestantism, chiefly among the Anglo-Saxon race, to a world-wide system of Christianization, which has reacted on all the great interests of its Anglo-Saxon field, has energized and ennobled most of its other characteristics, and would seem to pledge to it a universal and perpetual sway in the earth. Taken in connection with the London and Church Missionary Societies, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the London Tract Society, to all of which Methodism gave the originating impulse, and the Sunday-school institution, which it was the first to adopt as an agency of the Church, it is not too much to say that it has been transforming the character of English Protestantism and the moral prospects of the world. Its missionary development has preserved its primitive energy. According to the usual history of religious bodies, if not indeed by a law of the human mind, its early heroic character would have passed away by its domestic success, and the cessation of the novelty and trials of its early periods; but by throwing itself out upon all the world, and especially upon the strongest citadels of paganism, it has perpetuated its original militant spirit, and opened for itself a heroic career, which need end only with the universal

triumph of Christianity. English Methodism was considered, at the death of its founder, a marvelous fact in British history; but to-day the Wesleyan missions alone comprise more than twice the number of the regular preachers enrolled in the English Minutes in the year of Wesley's death, and nearly twice as many communicants as the Minutes then reported from all parts of the world which had been reached by Methodism. The latest reported number of missionary communicants in the Methodist Episcopal Church equals nearly one half the whole membership of the Church in the year (1819) before our narrative closes—the year in which the Missionary Society was founded—and is nearly double that with which the denomination closed the last century, after more than thirty years of labors and struggles.

Such, then, were some of the results with which Methodism was pregnant, by the development of its practical system, at the period of its history which we have reached, for all these great measures were initiated, as has been shown, before 1820. Nor are these all the results of those measures, for Methodism was yet a unit, save the comparatively limited schisms of O'Kelly (in our day extinct) and the African Methodists. All the existing Methodist bodies of the country have sprung from it, and their combined strength alone properly shows the aggregate result. Most of them have Book Concerns, periodicals, Sunday-schools, missions, academies, and colleges, all primarily the product of the Church of 1820, as of that of 1766. Half the Methodism of the country stands to day beyond the ecclesiastical limits of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but it all legitimately belongs to the prospective view of our present standpoint.

CHAPTER XIV.

ACTUAL AND PROSPECTIVE RESULTS: 1820.

Statistical Results of the Period — Comparative Statistics — Subsequent Results — Aggregate Statistics of the different Methodist Bodies of the United States — Relative Importance of Methodism in Modern Protestantism — The Problem of its Success.

We may well pause again, before recording the concluding facts of these pages, to consider the actual and prospective results, and the causes of the extraordinary, the almost incredible, success which we have been contemplating, and especially to view it in its more legitimate form as presented by the aggregate results of the various Methodist bodies which have sprung from the parent Church.

The statistical exhibit of Methodism in 1820 astonished not only the Church, but the country. It was evident that a great religious power had, after little more than half a century, been permanently established in the nation, not only with a practical system and auxiliary agencies of unparalleled efficiency, but sustained and propelled forward by hosts of the common people, the best bone and sinew of the Republic — and that all other religious denominations, however antecedent, were thereafter to take second rank to it, numerically at least, a fact of which Methodists themselves could not fail to be vividly conscious, and which might have critical effect on that humble devotion to religious life and work which had made them thus far successful. Their leaders saw the peril, and incessantly admonished

them to "rejoice with trembling." The aggregate returns show that there were now 273,858 members in the Church, with between nine and ten hundred itinerant preachers.[1] In the sixteen years of this period there was a gain of no less than 158,447 members, and of more than 500 preachers. In the twenty years of the century the increase was 208,964 members, and 617 preachers; the former had much more than quadrupled, and the latter much more than trebled.

The first native American Methodist preacher was still alive, and was to see both this large membership and its ministry more than doubled.

The comparative statistics of Methodism (if they may be given without the appearance of invidiousness) showed its peculiar energy; its communicants already lacked but about 13,000 to be equal to those of its elder sister, the Regular Baptist Church, which dates its American origin more than a century and a quarter before it, and, in one decade later, they were to be nearly a hundred thousand in advance of them. They were already much more than double the number of those of the Presbyterian Church, and more than eleven times those of the Protestant Episcopal Church.[2] In a

[1] An error in the Minutes of 1820 (vol. i, p. 346) is corrected by the Minutes of 1821, (ibid., p. 366.) The Minutes cannot be followed for the aggregates of any given calendar year, for the reason that the returns of the Western Conferences, printed in any given year, were made up the preceding year. I correct this defect in the estimate in my text. Bangs followed the Minutes without this modification; Goss's "Statistical History" has followed Bangs. The preachers for 1820 are given in the Minutes as 904, but this includes the preachers of the West only for 1819. The Minutes of 1821 give the ministry as 977; this includes the western preachers of 1820, but also those of the East down to the end of the spring (and one Conference beyond it) of 1821. The statement in the text is sufficiently precise.

[2] See Goss's tables, "Statistical History," etc., chap. v; but the reader must qualify them according to my preceding note.

few years more Methodism was to advance to the front of the Protestantism of the new world, and thenceforward, for good or evil, lead its van with continually increasing ascendency. It had advanced, by this year, to the front of the Methodist world, with a majority of 1,700 over the parent British denomination.

It had by 1820 a well-defined ecclesiastical geography, covering all the settled parts of the Republic and Canada, with its eleven immense Conferences, subdivided into sixty-four presiding elders' districts, and more than five hundred circuits, many of the latter full five hundred miles in range; and, as has been shown, it now possessed, in more or less organized form, nearly a complete series of secondary or auxiliary agencies of usefulness, literary, educational, and missionary. It seemed thoroughly equipped, and had only to move forward.

The wonderful success, thus far characteristic of the denomination, was to have no serious reaction in the remainder of its history down to our day. Great as that success now appears, it was to become comparatively small in contrast with the statistics of the centenary jubilee in 1866. On this memorable occasion the Methodist Episcopal Church alone was to see a full million of communicants within its pale, and in its congregations four millions of the population of the Republic. But it had become several bands; yet all were identical, save in some points of ecclesiastical polity. Its first assembly, in Embury's private house, had multiplied to thousands and tens of thousands of congregations; its first chapel, of 1768, to at least twenty thousand churches, studding the continent from the northernmost settlements of Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Its first two classes of 1766, recording six or seven members each, were now repre-

sented by 2,000,000 communicants;[3] its first congregation of five persons by about 8,000,000 of people; its three local preachers, Embury, Strawbridge, and Webb, who founded the whole cause, by at least 15,000 successors in their own order of the ministry; its first two itinerants, Boardman and Pilmoor, who reached the new world in 1769, by about 14,000 traveling preachers; its first educational institution, opened in 1787, by nearly 200 colleges and academies, with an army of 32,000 students; its first Sunday-school, started by Asbury in 1786, by at least 20,000 schools, 200,000 teachers, and over 1,500,000 scholars; its first periodical organ, begun in 1818, after a previous failure, by thirty periodical publications, the best patronized, and among the most effective in the nation; its first Book Concern, with its borrowed capital of $600, begun in 1789, by four or five similar institutions in the United States and Canada. The festivities of the centenary jubilee of the denomination were to be tempered, as well as enhanced, by the startling fact that it bore the chief responsibility of Protestantism in the new world, its aggregate membership being about half the Protestant communicants of the country, its congregations between one fifth and one fourth of the national population; and that, if the usual estimate, by geographers, of the Protestant population of the globe (80,000,000) is correct, American Methodism, with its eight millions of people, is responsible for one tenth (with general Methodism for one seventh) the interest and fate of the Protestant world.

The influence of this vast ecclesiastical force on the general progress of the new world can neither be

[3] I give the aggregates of the different Methodist bodies in America. The details can be found in the "Centenary Book," heretofore mentioned, cited mostly from official sources.

doubted nor measured. It is generally conceded that it has been the most energetic religious element in the social development of the continent. With its devoted and enterprising people dispersed through the whole population; its thousands of laborious itinerant preachers, and still larger hosts of local preachers and exhorters; its unequaled publishing agencies and powerful periodicals, from the Quarterly Review to the child's paper; its hundreds of colleges and academies; its hundreds of thousands of Sunday-school instructors; its devotion to the lower and most needy classes, and its animated modes of worship and religious labor, there can hardly be a question that it has been a mighty, if not the mightiest, agent in the maintenance and spread of Protestant Christianity over these lands.

The problem (so called) of this unequaled success has been the subject of no little discussion; but we may well hesitate to admit that there is any such problem. I have failed to interpret aright the whole preceding record, if it does not present, on almost every page intelligible reasons of its extraordinary events. A principal error in most of the discussions of this alleged problem has been the attempt to find some one fact or reason as its explanation. The problem (if such it may be admitted to be) is complex, and no single fact can suffice for its solution. Doubtless the theology of Methodism has had a potent influence on its history—its Arminianism, its doctrines of Regeneration, the Witness of the Spirit, and Sanctification. But it should be borne in mind that Calvinistic Methodism was, during most of the last century, as energetic as Arminian Methodism. It is as much so to-day in Wales, where it presents the best example of Sabbath observance and Church attendance in the Christian world. Whitefield was an ardent Cal-

vinist, but was he less a Methodist, less a flaming evangelist, than Wesley? Moravianism shared the theology of Methodism, especially its most vital, most experimental doctrines; but not its prosperity. Indisputably one of the greatest responsibilities of the denomination, for the future, is the maintenance and diffusion of its theology; but this cannot be assigned as the single, or the special, cause of its success.

The legislative genius of Wesley, the practical system of Methodism, has been pronounced the chief cause of its progress. It has been, doubtless, hardly less important than its theology; we have seen its power throughout this whole narrative. But neither of them explains the problem, for neither of them, nor both together, could have succeeded without something else. The whole Methodistic system, introduced into some of our comparatively inert modern denominations, could only result in a prodigious failure. Could they tear up their ministerial families by the roots every two or three years, and scatter them hither and thither? Could they drive out their comfortably domiciled pastors to wander over the land without certain homes or abiding places, preaching night and day, year in and year out? Could they throw their masses of people into class-meetings for weekly inspection respecting their religious progress or declension? The system, momentous as it has been, presupposes prior and infinitely more potential conditions.

If we must narrow the explanation to the fewest possible conditions, it may be said that there have been two chief causes of the success of Methodism, one primary, the other proximate.

First, it was a necessity of the times, a providential provision for the times. The government of God over

our world is a unit; the history of his Church is a unit; and however unable we may still be to correlate its divers parts, yet in ages to come, perhaps after hundreds of ages, the world will behold its perfect symmetry. History, if not as much under the sway of laws as physics, is nevertheless a providential process. The apostolic ministry founded the kingdom of Christ in the world, but the apostles themselves predicted the rise of Antichrist and the great "falling away." The mediæval night, a thousand years long, followed; the Renaissance, with the Reformation, began the modern history of the world. The Reformation proclaimed the right and responsibility of the individual conscience in the interpretation of the word of God, and reproclaimed the apostolic doctrine of justification by faith. It went far, if not as far as it might have gone; but in the eighteenth century its progressive power seemed about exhausted. It had made no great territorial advancement after about its first half century, and in the eighteenth century the Historical Criticism and Rationalism arose, and, with the prevailing popular demoralization, threatened, as Burnet affirms, not only the Anglican Church, but "the whole Reformation." It had become necessary that some new development of Christianity should take place. It was a providential necessity, and God provided for it. At this very period of apparent danger the world was in the travail of a new birth. The American and French Revolutions were drawing near. The most important phases of the civilized world were to be transformed. Science, commerce, government, religion were to pass into a new cycle, perhaps their final cycle. The revolution in religion was to be as conspicuous as any other change in the grand process. The rights of conscience were to be more fully devel

oped; the separation of the Church from the State, and the "voluntary principle," were to be introduced. For the first time, in recorded history, was about to be seen the spectacle of a great nation without a state religion. Medieval dogmatism was to be more fully thrown into abeyance; ecclesiasticism and hierarchism to receive a shock under which they might still reel for a while, but only to fall, sooner or later, to their proper subordination or desuetude. The permanent, essential principles, not so much of theology (so called) as of religion, were to revive with the power of their apostolic promulgation. Missions, Sunday schools, Bible societies, popular religious literature, all those powers which I have affirmed to have arisen with Methodism, were to come into activity in the religious world co-ordinately with the new energies of the secular world. The Church, in fine, was anew to become a living, working organism, and to be not only the Church of the present, but, probably, the Church of the future. The old questions of rationalistic biblical criticism and of ecclesiasticism were not to be immediately laid, but they were to become only occasional incidents to the Christian movement of the new age. Colenso and the Essayists, Pusey and the Oxford Papal tendencies, were yet to appear, but not seriously to obstruct the march of evangelical truth. Methodism had its birth at the date of Rationalism in Germany. The biblical criticism of Colenso and the Essayists was anticipated in the writings of Bolingbroke and other English authors before Methodism had fairly started. That criticism is much older. Spinoza's Politico-Theological Treatise is almost entirely made up of it — in many respects a much abler discussion than modern English doubt has produced. We know not how far modern critical skepticism may yet go; we

know not what, if any, demonstrations it may reach; but one thing we absolutely know, that the ethical purity which speaks in the gospel, the spiritual life which filled the primitive Church with saints, heroes, martyrs, and which is now filling the Christian world with good works, sanctified homes, and peaceful death-beds, can never be overthrown; that against a living, loving, working Church the gates of hell can never prevail; and that the very existence of such a Church presupposes the coexistence of all essential theology. The production of such a Church was the special providential appointment of the eighteenth century, a "continuous revival" of spiritual life, as Wesley was able to say after fifty years, in the old world; a still continued "revival," as we are able to say to-day, after a hundred years, in the new world. If we may not venture to affirm that Methodism, distinctively so called, is this modern development of Christianity, we need not hesitate to say, with Isaac Taylor, that the religious movement of the eighteenth century, called Methodism—Calvinistic and Arminian—is its true historical exponent—"the event whence the religious epoch now current must date its commencement."

Such was the providential origin of Methodism, such the primary condition of its success. But what was its other chief, or proximate cause?

The "Holy Club" was founded at Oxford, and the title of Methodism given to it in 1729, ten years before the recognized epoch of the religious movement which it was to introduce. The Wesleys, Whitefield, and other mighty men were then or soon after in it; but they had no notable success, for they had not yet received "power from on high." The Wesleys came to America, and labored faithfully here, but still without

success, and they returned home defeated. Something was yet needed. They preached and suffered in England, but still without appreciable effect. As Methodism was to be the next great stage of religious progress, after the Reformation, it was to have affinity with the Reformation. The salient doctrinal fact of the Reformation was justification by faith. Wesley had been feeling after this as in the dark during all these ten years; but now, by the very writings in which Luther had declared it at the Reformation, he was to find it. On the 24th of May, 1738, sitting in a little religious meeting in Aldersgate-street, and listening to the reading of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, the great truth flashed upon his soul. "I felt," he writes, "my heart strangely warmed; an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Here is the proximate cause of all the Methodism in the world to-day, for this was the "dispensation of the Spirit," which has since continued in a baptism of fire upon the Churches. On that memorable night genuine Methodism had its birth. What would have been Wesley's theological opinions without this quickening of the Spirit?—Tenets only of the brain, exciting him to unavailing struggles, as they had for ten years. What his practical system, had he even been able to devise it, but a wretched failure, from which he and his people would soon have recoiled, as from a burden intolerable to be borne? This new spiritual life, this "strange" warmth of the heart, made his theology vital, his system practicable; gave power and demonstration to his preaching, and spread like contagion through his assemblies. It intoned their hymns, and kindled their prayer-meetings, band-meetings,

classes, and love-feasts. The manner of its inspiration, the time of its experience, its effects and evidences, and the extent to which it could be perfected, became the themes of discourse in their meetings and in their familiar converse all through the British realm. Conversion, the Witness of the Spirit, and Sanctification, were but its corollary truths. It inspired men to enter the ministry, it inspired their preaching, and produced the peculiar power of their preaching, and of all their denominational methods, as witnessed throughout the world. Without it almost everything else that is characteristically Methodistic would have been not only ineffective, but impracticable. The multitudes, the very mobs, recognized this power of personal religion, this divine power and glory of the regenerated man in the representatives of the new movement; they saw it in their countenances, in their tears, and heard it in their tones. It was the magical power by which they controlled riots, and led persecutors in weeping processions from the highways and market places to the altars of their humble chapels. If it be inquired what has been the one chief force in the success of Methodism, and what is the chief power for its future success, I reply, it is this "power from on high," this "unction from the Holy One."

Such, I think, were the primary and proximate conditions of the success of Methodism. There were also many others doubtless: its catholicity; the subordination, not to say insignificance, to which it reduced all exclusive or arrogant ecclesiastic pretensions; the importance which it gave to good and charitable works while insisting on a profound personal, if not a mystic piety; the unprecedented co-operation of the laity with the clergy in at least religious labors, which it estab-

lished; the activity of women in its social devotions; these, and still more.

I mention further but one, and particularly because it affords an important admonitory lesson—the character of its chiefs. And I mean not merely their greatness. They were indeed great men, as the world is beginning to acknowledge: Whitefield, the greatest of modern preachers; Wesley, the greatest of religious organizers; Asbury, unquestionably the greatest character in the ecclesiastical history of this hemisphere judged by the results of his labors. But it was not so much by their great abilities, as by qualities in which all may share, that they made Methodism what it is. Its leaders were its exemplars, and that fact expresses more of the philosophy of its history than any other except that of the "baptism from on high." There is no human power above that of character. The character, not the genius, of Washington has made him chief among the military or civic sons of men. The character of a military leader can make a whole army an array of heroes or a melee of cowards. The army of the Shenandoah was rolling back shattered and hopeless, but when its chief arrived on his foaming steed, after that long and solitary ride, it stood forth again invincible; the drawing of his single sword before it, flashed lightning along all its bayonets and banners, and it dealt back the blow which sent the enemy reeling irrecoverably to destruction. The greatest of talents is character, and character is the most attainable of talents.

Had John Wesley, when his cause was somewhat established, retired from his self-sacrificing labors, and acted the dignified, well-endowed prelate in City Road parsonage, his whole system would soon have fallen through. By traveling more, laboring more, and suf-

fering more than any of his preachers, he kept them all heroically traveling, laboring, suffering. Asbury kept Methodism astir throughout this nation by hastening from Georgia to Massachusetts on horseback, yearly, for nearly half a century, preaching daily. None of his preachers exceeded him in even the humblest labors of the ministry. His power was military, and he used it with military energy; but, as has been shown, he imposed on the ministry no task that he did not himself exemplify. Under his command the Conferences moved as columns in the field of battle, for they knew that their leader would be in the thickest fight, would be chief in suffering and labor as in authority and honor. Asbury's daily life was a challenge to the humblest of them to endure all things. It became a point of chivalric honor among them to evade no labor or suffering; they consented to be tossed from Baltimore to Boston, from Boston to beyond the Alleghanies. How would all this have been changed if Asbury, at his episcopal ordination, had housed himself in Baltimore, reposing on his dignity, and issuing his commands, without exemplifying them! The Church should understand, then, that its great men must be great workers in whatever sphere they occupy; that this is a requisite of the age, and has always been a requisite of Methodism. An itinerant superintendency or episcopacy has ever been a favorite idea of its people. They have instinctively perceived its importance, and the founders of the Church declared in its constitutional law that the General Conference shall not "change or alter any part or rule of our government so as . . . to destroy the plan of our itinerant superintendency." The unity of the denomination, the fellowship of the Churches, their co-operation in great common undertakings, and the self-sacrificing

spirit of the ministry generally, have been largely attributable to this fact of their system, a fact peculiar to Methodism among Episcopal Churches.

With changes of time must come changes of policy, if not changes of what have been deemed fundamental opinions. Methodism has, through most of its history, been taking on new adaptations. Unrestricted by any dogmatism whatever in ecclesiastical polity, and less restricted, as we have seen, by theological creeds, than any other evangelical Church, it stands unshackled for its future career. That it will change, that it has changed, cannot be doubted; but devoting itself, as it has been increasingly, to the elevation of its people, to education, literature, liberty, civil and religious, missions, the amelioration of its own acknowledged defects, and all charitable works, there would seem to be, not only possible, but feasible to it, a destiny hardly less grand than its history.
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CHAPTER XV.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD, 1804–1820: DEATHS OF WHATCOAT, COKE, ASBURY, AND LEE.

Deaths of Preachers — Whatcoat's Character and Death — His Grave — Coke's Death, and Burial in the Indian Ocean — Asbury's Estimate of him — His great Services and Character — Asbury — His Character — Last Scenes of his Life — Funeral Ceremonies at the General Conference of 1816 — Jesse Lee's Death — His Character — His Defeat as Candidate for the Episcopate — His historical Rank — Conclusion.

In casting a glance back over these sixteen years, so replete with great characters and achievements, we are reminded of events which might strike us as catastrophes were it not that they were in the order of Divine Providence, and therefore in "due season," and illustrations of the Methodistic maxim that "God calls home his workmen, but carries on his work." Besides the hosts of men, many of them prominent, who fell by death in the ministerial field, and whose decease has been noticed, Whatcoat, Coke, Asbury, and Lee have all disappeared from the scene as we close the period.

I have heretofore sketched the life and character of Whatcoat as fully as the scanty recorded data will admit.[1] He sustained his episcopal functions with continual disability, from chronic disease, but was ever in motion throughout the whole extent of the Church North, South, East, and West. His beautiful character preached more effectually than his sermons. Peculiarly

[1] See vol. ii, pp. 157, 166, 168, 295; vol. iii, p. 75; vol. iv, pp. 64, 113.

simple, sober, but serene and cheerful, living as well as teaching his favorite doctrine of sanctification, extremely prudent in his administration, pathetically impressive in discourse, and "made perfect through sufferings," he is pre-eminently the saint in the primitive calendar of American Methodism. In November, 1806, Asbury wrote to Fleming: "Dear Father Whatcoat, after thirteen weeks' illness—gravel, stone, dysentery combined—died, a martyr to pain, in all patience and resignation to the will of God. May we, like him, if we live long live well, and die like him."

He had "finished his sixth episcopal tour through the work after his consecration," says his biographer,[2] "or near that, and, after great suffering, he got an honorable discharge from the Captain of his salvation, and by his permission came in from his post, which he had faithfully kept for fifty years." He took refuge at the home of Senator Bassett, Dover, Del., where he died, "in the full assurance of faith," say the Minutes, July 5, 1806.[3] "He professed," add his brethren, "the justifying and sanctifying grace of God, and all that knew him well might say, If a man on earth possessed these blessings, surely it was Richard Whatcoat."

Nearly a year later Asbury reached Dover, and over his tomb declared that he "knew Richard Whatcoat, from his own age of fourteen to sixty-two years, most intimately—his holy manner of life, in duty at all times, in all places, and before all people, as a Christian and as a minister; his long suffering as a man of great affliction of body and mind, having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors; his charity, his love

[2] Dr. Phœbus: "Memoirs of Bishop Whatcoat," etc., p. 101. New York, 1828; a meager production, out of print.

[3] Minutes, 1807.

of God and man, in all its effects, tempers, words, and actions; bearing, with resignation and patience, great temptations, bodily labors, and inexpressible pain. In life and death he was placid and calm. As he lived, so he died."

He was thirty-seven years an itinerant preacher twenty-two of them in America, six in the episcopate, and died aged seventy. He was buried under the altar of Dover Wesley Chapel, where he had often preached with tears and with power, and where for years his name, inscribed on stone, was a spell of influence to all in the congregation who had known him.[4]

We have witnessed Coke's final departure from the United States in 1804. On his return to England he was made president (in 1805) of the Wesleyan Conference. I have elsewhere recorded, somewhat in detail, his subsequent and sublime life,[5] and have attempted to delineate in the present work his extraordinary character and labors. After his last visit to this country he seemed, for nine years, almost ubiquitous in the United Kingdom, administering the affairs of the Wesleyan Church, founding and conducting its Irish, its Welsh, its "Domestic," and its Foreign Missions, virtually embodying in his own person the whole missionary enterprise of English Methodism. When an old man of nearly seventy years he conceived the project of introducing Methodism into Asia. He presented himself before the British Conference, and, against great oppo-

[4] Wesley Chapel stood about a quarter of a mile from Dover. The congregation outgrew its size, and in 1850 its materials were incorporated in a new and costly church in the town. The bishop still sleeps in the old place, near the railroad station. The Philadelphia Conference erected, in 1855, "a beautiful monument" over his grave.

[5] History of the Religious Movement, etc., vol. iii, *passim*. See also the present work, vol. ii, p. 151.

sition, entreated, with tears, to be sent as a missionary to India, offering to defray the expenses of himself and seven chosen colleagues. The Conference could not resist his appeal, and at length, on the 30th of December, 1813, he departed with his little band, consisting of nine persons besides himself, (two of them wives of missionaries,) in a fleet of six Indiamen. Terrible gales swept over them. In the Indian Ocean his health rapidly declined. On the morning of the third of May, 1814, his servant knocked at his cabin door to awake him at his usual time, but heard no response. Opening the door he beheld the lifeless body of the missionary extended on the floor. A "placid smile was on his countenance." He was cold and stiff, and must have died before midnight. It is supposed that he had risen to call for help, and fell by apoplexy. His cabin was separated by only a thin wainscot from others, in which no noise or struggle had been heard, and it is inferred that he died without violent suffering. Consternation spread among the missionary band, but they lost not their resolution. They prepared to commit him to the deep, and to prosecute, as they might be able, his great design. A coffin was made, and at five o'clock in the afternoon the corpse was solemnly borne up to the leeward gangway, where it was covered with signal flags, the soldiers were drawn up in rank on the deck; the bell of the ship tolled, and the crew and passengers, deeply affected, crowded around the scene. One of the missionaries read the burial service, and the moment that the sun sank below the Indian Ocean the coffin was cast into its depths. He died in his sixty-seventh year. Though the great leader was no more, his spirit remained; and the East Indian Missions of Methodism, "presenting in our day a state of massive

strength and inexpressible utility," sprang from this fatal voyage.

The news of his death struck a sensation through all the Methodist world. He was commemorated in funeral sermons in the principal Methodist churches of America. Asbury preached them in all his routes, before the assembled preachers, in Conference, and pronounced him a man "of blessed mind and soul; a gentleman, a scholar, and a bishop, and as a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labors, and in services, the greatest man in the last century."

In the frequent accounts of him in these pages I have not disguised his faults; for, though there was essential greatness in his character, he had, doubtless, characteristic weaknesses also. There have been few great men without them. The faults of such men become the more noticeable, either by contrast with or by partaking of their greatness; and the vanity of ordinary human nature is eagerly disposed, in self-gratulation, to criticise as peculiar defects of superior minds infirmities that are common to all. Coke's attempt with Bishop White to unite the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal Churches has been regarded as a blunder, if not worse than a blunder; but had it been successful it might have appeared quite otherwise. Unquestionably it betrays a want of that keen sagacity which passes for prudence, though it is oftener guile. There was a vein of simplicity running through his whole nature, such as sometimes marks the highest genius. He was profound in nothing except his religious sentiments. A certain capaciousness of soul, really vast, belonged to him, but it never took the character of philosophic generalization. It is impossible to appreciate such a man without taking into the estimate the element of Christian faith. The

Christian religion being true, he was among the most rational of men; that being false, he was, like Paul, and all genuine Christians, "of all men the most miserable," and the most irrational. Practical energy was his chief intellectual trait, and if it was sometimes effervescent, it was never evanescent. He had a leading agency in the greatest facts of Methodism, and it was impossible that the series of momentous deeds which mark his career could have been the result of mere accident or fortune. They must have been legitimate to the man. Neither Whitefield nor Wesley exceeded him in ministerial travels. It is probable that no Methodist of his day, it is doubtful whether any Protestant of his day, contributed more from his own property for the spread of the gospel. His biographer says that he expended the whole of his patrimonial estate, which was large, on his missions and their chapels. He was married twice; both his wives were like-minded with himself, and both had considerable fortunes, which were used like his own. In 1794 was published an account of his missionary receipts and disbursements for the preceding year, from which it appeared that there were due him nearly eleven thousand dollars; but he gave the whole sum to the cause. Flying, during nearly forty years, over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; crossing the Atlantic eighteen times; traversing the United States and the West Indies; the first who suggested the organization of English Methodism by Wesley's Deed of Declaration; the organizer, under Wesley, of American Methodism; one of the first, if not the very first, of Protestant bishops in the Western hemisphere; the founder of the Methodist missions in the West Indies, in Africa, and in Asia, as well as in Ireland, Wales, and England; the official and almost sole director of the missionary

operations of the denomination during his long public life, and the founder of its first Tract Society, he must be recognized as one of the chief representative men of modern religious history, if not, indeed, as Asbury pronounced him, "the greatest man of the last century" "as a minister of Christ."

On the 31st of March, 1816, Francis Asbury fell in death at the head of the hosts of Methodists who had been marshaled and led on, chiefly by himself, over all the republic for nearly half a century. If a distinct portraiture of his character had not been attempted, in the outset of his American career,[6] it would now be superfluous, for he has thus far been the most familiar actor in our story, the dominant hero of American Methodist history. Though not the first, he was the chief founder of the denomination in the new world. The history of Christianity, since the apostolic age, affords not a more perfect example of ministerial and episcopal devotion than was presented in this great man's life. He preached almost daily for more than half a century. During forty-five years he traveled, with hardly an intermission, the North American continent from North to South, and East to West, directing the advancing Church with the skill and authority of a great captain. Beginning his itinerant ministry in England when but seventeen years of age, he came to America in his twenty-sixth year, was ordained bishop of the Church when thirty-nine years old, when it comprised less than fifteen thousand members, and but about eighty preachers, and fell in his seventy-first year, commanding an army of more than two hundred and eleven thousand Methodists, and more than seven hundred

[6] See vol. i, p. 111, and "History of the Religious Movement," etc., vols. ii and iii, *passim*.

itinerant preachers. It has been estimated that in his American ministry he preached about sixteen thousand five hundred sermons, or at least one a day, and traveled about two hundred and seventy thousand miles, or six thousand a year; that he presided in no less than two hundred and twenty-four annual Conferences, and ordained more than four thousand preachers. He was, in fine, one of those men of extraordinary, of anomalous greatness, in estimating whom the historian is compelled to use terms which would be irrelevant, as hyperbole, to most men with whom he has to deal. His discrimination of character was marvelous; his administrative talents would have placed him, in civil government or in war, by the side of Richelieu or Cesar, and his success placed him unquestionably at the head of the leading characters of American ecclesiastical history. No one man has done more for Christianity in the western hemisphere. His attitude in the pulpit was solemn and dignified, if not graceful; his voice was sonorous and commanding, and his discourses were often attended with bursts of eloquence "which spoke a soul full of God, and, like a mountain torrent, swept all before it."[7] With Wesley, Whitefield, and Coke, he ranks as one of the four greatest representative men of the Methodistic movement. In American Methodism he ranks immeasurably above all his contemporaries and successors. Notwithstanding his advanced age and shattered health he continued his travels to the last, as we have seen, till he had to be aided up the pulpit steps, and to sit while preaching.

We last took leave of him in the West, some six months before he died, when he wrote: "My eyes fail. I will resign the stations to Bishop M'Kendree. I will

[7] Bangs, vol. ii, p. 398.

take away my feet." Thence he journeyed southward, suffering from influenza, which resulted in pulmonary ulceration and consumption. He endeavored to advance northward, to meet, once more, the General Conference at Baltimore, preaching continually on the way. While passing through Virginia he wrote: "I die daily—am made perfect by labor and suffering, and fill up still what is behind. There is no time, no opportunity to take medicine in the day; I must do it at night. I am wasting away with a constant dysentery and cough." In the last entry of his journal (save a single sentence) he says: "My consolations are great. I live in God from moment to moment—broken to pieces." He reached Richmond, Va., and at three o'clock Sunday afternoon, March 24, 1816, preached there in the old Methodist church his last sermon. He was carried to and from the pulpit, and sat while preaching. His faithful traveling companion, Bond, took him to Spottsylvania, where he failed rapidly, and on Sunday 21st, expired, raising both his hands, when unable to speak, in affirmative reply to an inquiry respecting his trust and comfort in Christ.

His remains were disinterred, and borne to Baltimore, at the ensuing General Conference, where, with public solemnities, a sermon from M'Kendree, and an immense procession, they were laid to rest beneath the altar of Eutaw-street Church.

In that procession, including all the General Conference, and hundreds of other clergymen from the city and neighboring churches, walked Jesse Lee. Thrift, his biographer, who was by his side, says, "The scene was solemn and impressive; Lee's countenance bespoke his emotions. A dignified sorrow, such as veterans feel while following to the grave an old companion in arms, was evinced by his words and countenance. They had

suffered together, and had long fought in the same ranks. The one had gained his crown, the other was soon to receive his." In less than six months Lee also had fallen. About the middle of August he went to a camp meeting near Hillsborough, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. After preaching he was seized with fever, and carried to Hillsborough. All remedies failed. He suffered at first from depression; but "for several days preceding his death he was filled with holy joy. Frequently he cried out, 'Glory, glory, glory! halleluiah, halleluiah! Jesus reigns!' At another time he spoke with great distinctness and deliberation for nearly twenty minutes, giving directions about his affairs, and sending the assurance he was 'dying in the Lord' to comfort his distant family. Nor did he forget his fellow-laborers. 'Give my respects to Bishop M'Kendree,' he said, 'and tell him I die in love with all the preachers; that I do love him, and that he lives in my heart.' Having finished his work, he said but little more; but fell asleep on the evening of the 12th of September, 1816." [8] He was borne to Baltimore, and interred in its "old Methodist burial ground."

He was fifty-eight years old. A man of vigorous, though unpolished mind, of rare popular eloquence, and tireless energy, an itinerant evangelist, from the British provinces to Florida, for thirty-five years, a presiding elder for many years, a chief counsellor of the Church in its Annual and General Conferences, chaplain to Congress, founder of Methodism in New England, and first historian of the Church, he lacked only the episcopal office to give him rank with Asbury and Coke. Asbury early chose him for that position. Some two or three times it seemed likely that

[8] Lee's Life of Lee, p. 503.

he would be elected to it, but his manly independence and firmness of opinion, in times of party strife, were made the occasions of his defeat. His staunch advocacy of an elective presiding eldership, and his opposition to the ordination of local preachers as elders, (questions of prolonged and spirited controversy,) cost him the suffrages of men who should have been superior to such party considerations, at least in the presence of such a man. But his historic position needed no such addition. No official distinction could enhance its dignity. In public services he may fairly be ranked next to Asbury, and as founder and apostle of eastern Methodism he is above any other official rank. In this respect his historic honor is quite unique; for though individual men have, in several other sections of the continent, initiated the denomination, no other founder has, so completely as he, introduced, conducted, and concluded his work, and from no other one man's similar work has proceeded equal advantages to American Methodism.

Thus fell, in arms, but victorious, toward the conclusion of our period, one after another of the most conspicuous heroes of this grand Methodistic battle-field of the new world; the last two, (and perhaps the two most important in the American history of the denomination,) in the very year that completed its first half century, and all of them giving, by both their great deeds and sublime deaths, a sort of epic grandeur and completeness to the history of the Church down to this epoch. In no place can the historian more appropriately drop the curtain of this singular religious drama. And he should have the good sense not to mar it with elaborate reflections, for it needs none. Its every page has been suggestive of lessons, and it requires no epilogue. It demonstrates one obvious and sublime fact: that

Christianity, thrown back upon its primordial truths and forces, cannot fail, in its very simplicity, humility, charity, and power, to attain the mastery of the human soul, to wield the supremacy of the moral world. This lowly Methodistic story is but the reproduction, in substance, of the apostolic history, and presents, in full vitality, that original, that only example of evangelical propagandism, which, when all dogmatic conflicts and hierarchical pretensions, with their wasted passions and pomps, are recorded as historical failures, will bear forward to universal triumph the ensign of the cross by a catholic, living, working Church of the common people.

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